

JOHN KNOX M<sup>c</sup>LEAN

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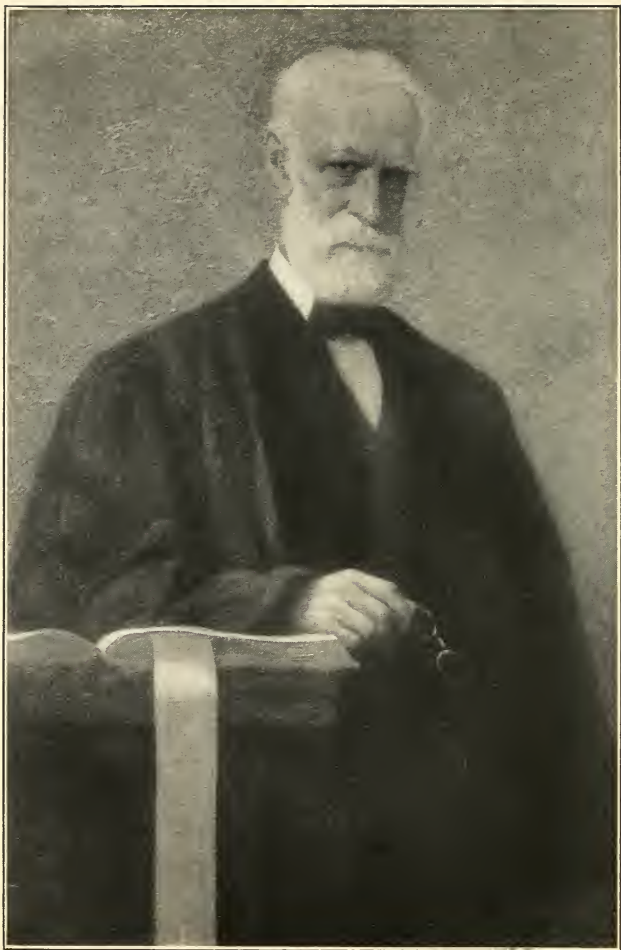












L. K. McLean

From portrait at age of seventy-eight, by Winifred Rieber  
Owned by Pacific Theological Seminary

# JOHN KNOX McLEAN

## A BIOGRAPHY

BY

JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM

, 1914.

SMITH BROTHERS  
OAKLAND, CAL.



TO  
HENRY VAN DYKE  
FRIEND AND COMRADE OF DOCTOR McLEAN  
COUNSELOR AND FRIEND OF THE WRITER  
THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY  
INSCRIBED

BEFORE EVERY OPEN DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY  
THE SOUL IS FREE TO ENTER, TO LOITER, OR  
TO TURN AWAY

DOCTOR MCLEAN

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JOHN KNOX McLEAN



## FOREWORD

The aim of this volume is not only to help to preserve the memory of a good man and the influence of a sane and noble life—though that were enough—but to make evident, through a brief and simple narrative, something of the beauty and might of the Christian ministry in our age.

In order to make the life-story tell itself, as far as possible, I have incorporated much of what has been called “unconscious autobiography”—reflections and narratives of Dr. McLean’s own.

The use of quotation marks has been as far as possible, limited. All indented sentences and paragraphs should be understood as quotations. The writer’s close association with President McLean in the Faculty of Pacific Theological Seminary is his only justification, save the wish of Dr. McLean’s family, for assuming the privilege of writing this biography.

Thanks for assistance are cordially given to Mrs. McLean, Mrs. Warren Olney, Jr., to my colleagues, President Nash and Professor Badè and to E. P. Flint, Esq., Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Richardson and Mr. H. R. Jones of the First Church of Oakland.

If the little volume at all reflects the spirit of its subject, it cannot fail to give pleasure and do good.



## CHAPTER I.

### WISDOM NEVER LEARNED OF SCHOOLS.

John Knox McLean was born in Jackson, New York, on the thirty-first day of March, 1834. His father, Thomas King McLean, was the eldest of six sons of John McLean, a prosperous farmer of Washington County.

The McLeans are Highlanders, whose original home was the Isle of Mull, "a bold and hardy race," whom John Stuart Blackie has described as "generous in purpose and noble in conduct".<sup>1</sup>

Our scion of the McLeans was justly proud of his Scotch strain. But, lest he should be unduly exalted, as the Scotchman sometimes is, there was given unto him an admixture of Dutch blood (what more natural or nearer royalty, in the valley of the Hudson?) coming to him mingled with French, through his mother, Mary Perine.

It was a wholesome admixture, if one may judge from the eight children who were the fruit of the union, five sons—John Knox being the youngest—and three daughters, all witnessing by their lives to the beneficent effects of a home life pure, thrifty, reverent.

Wonderful is the miracle of the awakening of a personality. The man whose development we are to follow has himself suggested it in these words: "A twinkle of intelligence; a momentary fixed attention; a glimmer of imagination

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Clan McLean*; J. P. McLean, p. 22.

caught by eager eyes; a flitting smile, provoked surely from without and no longer product of Nature's inner subtlety: Education has begun."

The early life of John was that of a typical farmer's boy—isolated and hard-working, but rich in health and happiness and in companionship with Nature.

"Hand in hand with her he walked,  
Face to face with her he talked,  
Part and parcel of her joy."

"I lived," said Dr. McLean, in describing his boyhood, "in the smallest town of Washington County, a town in which there was farming alone—no store, no factory, no railroad." Far from advantageous this seems, at first thought, for the upbringing of a child. But on the other hand, the advantages of it proved incalculable, in this as in countless other cases.

So deeply did the love of Nature—her beauties, her sublimities, her lessons—sink into the heart of this disciple that to the end of his life these boyhood days on the farm served him as treasure-trove, from which he constantly drew illustration, suggestion, and inspiration. The accuracy of his boyhood recollections is well illustrated in a delightfully fresh and boyish open letter written in later life and addressed to Henry Ward Beecher, entitled "A piscatory Epistle to Brother Beecher," in which, after warmly expressing his admiration, he points out to his distinguished brother preacher certain egregious blunders in his chapter on "Night Fishing," in

"Norwood," as for example, the anomaly of catching suckers in *red clover time*. But of the effects of this tutelage of nature we will let Dr. McLean himself speak, in words taken from a paper on "The Multitude and the Solitude," read before the Berkeley Club in 1900:

The tuition of Nature upon the country child is deep, penetrating and abiding. I, myself, knew a boy, a very little boy, not like Wordsworth's, but tow-headed, freckle-faced, unpromising, who began life a stranger to all reverence. The only suggestion of it was a distressing bashfulness. His people duly took him in the big farm wagon to church. Little development he got at church, except it might be through the bent-pin exercises of the Sunday School; those interested him. But in the *big wagon on the way to church*, and *on the way home again*, he imbibed what, he has told me, he now regards as an incipency of real religion. Going to church, over a range of hills half as high as ours, the broad distant valley of the Hudson stretched before his eyes, shut in afar by the Saratoga hills and lower Adirondacks. While going home, the way looked always upon the long ram-parts, for miles up and down, of the beautiful Green Mountains of Vermont. These were to him two boundaries of the world. Forest-clad, distance-mellowed, violet-hued, they were the very abode of mystery and strangeness. There could be nothing be-

yond them. But as to the scope within them, that was an open region within which imagination ran riot. Evil spirits, witches, hobgoblins, dwelt there, no doubt; he had not listened to his Pilgrim's Progress to so little purpose as to have question about that. But what else might be there; was a point which had to find its solution by degrees and was finally reached through a sudden burst of illumination.

It came about in this wise. The boy's legs had grown but were still short. He had come to know pasture, meadow, upland, and to some degree the woods—the woods, always, to a child, that fearsome place. One June day (it must have been, from my friend's account) this boy, a mile from home, far enough to be in very depths of strangeness, was going with tense drawn nerves at boy's pace through a chestnut forest. The place was flooded with sunshine, radiant with all greeneries, redolent of young summer, a paradise, but for the awesomeness. It would not, however, be an evil spirit that would come out upon one at such a time, but rather some fair lady, exceeding rich and beautiful, who dwelt lonely in deep forest grotto and would be seeking some boy whom she might adopt and make him rich and famous. With such fancies prancing through his brain, of a sudden, from on high, bell-notes, so clear, mellow, sweet and round as mortal ear had never



heard! It was the lad's first introduction to the hermit thrush; but you could not persuade his quickened nerves it was a bird! No bird could make a fellow's heart go that way. And he had looked for it long and well; the sounds would continue until he came within a stone's throw of the place, then cease and anon fall from some other quarter. It was quickly established in his mind that this was none other than a visitant from heaven. And thence-forward the woods to him were full of them. He could not detail this encounter back at home, he would only get laughed at for his fright. And so the illusion remained with all its brilliant impressiveness unremoved. And my friend assures me this simple incident in the woods proved to be a turning point in his life; that bird song was the key which began to unlock certain new faculties within him; the nature faculties, he calls them now. He goes further and avers that to his childhood's Sunday-to-meeting rides, and to this vision out of the empyrean he ascribes his very salvation. That is drawing it rather strongly. But, while sometimes I have felt inclined to question in my mind as to how far my friend's salvation has really gone—nevertheless such odds and ends, such rags and tatters of it as he has attained to, I can well believe did have their beginnings in these and other like intimations lent by Nature. And I am sure that

thousands and thousands of other boys and girls have been wrought upon in similar ways, which, if not so fantastic as in the case of my friend, were quite as real and dominating.

In spite of the advantages and life-long gains of life on a farm in the early half of the last century, it must now be added—as evidenced by all the sons of Thomas McLean, including John—that the farm of that day was not only a good place to be brought up upon but a good place to go from. “Well, Johnny, you’re going to stay on the farm,” it used to be said to him. But it proved otherwise. “Plowing and all that,” as he once summed it up—well, that was the other side.

Owing partly to the fact that one of his uncles was the occupant of a seat on the bench and to something akin in the boy himself, John, as a little fellow, was often dubbed “Judge,” to which he would reply with spirit, “If you don’t stop, I *will* be a judge.” In fact his ambition began to turn strongly toward the Law. With this or some kindred service as an objective, he began to give earnest attention to his education. Leaving the district school at the age of sixteen, he commenced teaching in order to continue his education—a kind of teach-to-learn system then quite in vogue.

The self-impartment which was to be the principle of his life began in the district school in a neighboring town, where he “boarded round” and taught twenty-one scholars of all

grades and ages at a salary of sixteen dollars a month, and "liked it." What wonder, when he had already fallen under the spell of an attractive maiden whom he had met at the Academy and who lived not far away? Of which more, later.

With that indomitable energy and inexhaustible physical and mental resourcefulness possessed by the ambitious farmer boy, John McLean pushed his way ahead until he was prepared to enter college and not only that but to enter the Sophomore class. This he did in 1855 at Union College, then under the presidency of the famous educator and friend of young men, Eliphalet Nott.

It is a familiar story in our American life in the last century—this of the farmer's boy, making his way over obstacles and hardships to college—familiar, but never lacking in interest and romance. For we know that something will surely come of it.

It was one of Dr. McLean's acknowledged and defended habits to get his knowledge from life and from contact with his fellow men rather than from books. And yet he honored, and to a degree practiced, the book and school method, also, though never giving it the relative rank which it holds among the pedantic. To the "wisdom never learned of schools" he added that of the schools.

College meant much to him—yet not its textbooks and teachers, so much as its atmosphere and comradeships. "The great college com-

plex is what tells upon the student," he wrote, long years afterward. The pages of his college autograph album tell something of the story of the place that "Mac" held in the hearts of his fellow students, and his election to Phi Beta Kappa attests the quality of his scholarship. Among his college mates were his friends and associates of later years, Dr. Warring Wilkinson and Principal J. B. McChesney.

It was during his college course that the religious aspirations of his boyhood matured into firm conviction, and on the twenty-seventh of June, 1858, a month before his graduation, he united with the Presbyterian Church of Schenectady. With this step came the determination to enter the ministry, an increasing call to which he had felt as he studied his own heart, the needs of humanity and the opportunities of doing good. In the September following his graduation from Union College, Mr. McLean entered Princeton Theological Seminary. Here he adapted himself to the scholastic atmosphere, took the entire course, duly and creditably—and had his note-books as well as a considerable acquirement of "sound" theology, to show for it.

One more ordeal and, his novitiate passed, the young minister was ready to enter into his chosen work. This was his examination for licensure, which took place before the Albany Presbytery at Schenectady, May 1, 1860. The "parts of the trial" were: Sermon, Heb. 2:10; Popular Lecture, Rom. 9:14-21; Exegesis, Gal. 3:21-29; Thesis (Latin) *An Sit Deus Auctor Peccati*.

These papers are in the possession of Pacific Theological Seminary Library, and show, as might be expected, somewhat formal but careful and scholarly work. The issue was favorable. The guardians of the Faith were satisfied. The arduous hill of theological learning was surmounted. With the final stamp of approval of the schools upon him, in his graduation from the Seminary, April 23, 1861, the stalwart young theologian went out "not knowing whither he went," to try his yet untested powers in the service of the Lord of the Vineyard. For several months he preached in various small churches in New York and New Jersey, and, in the spring of 1861, became pastor of the Congregational Church of Fair Haven, Connecticut.

As yet, and for some years to come (as his note books clearly indicate), he failed to enter into the full freedom and scope of the truth and life of Christianity. Conventionality hemmed him in. The wisdom never learned of schools was too far suppressed by the wisdom of the schools; but as he gave himself to his work and as he studied humanity and nature and his Bible, gradually the native originality and power latent within him developed and he passed into the strength and freedom of an ever-enlarging ministry.

## CHAPTER II.

### THROUGH LOWLY DOORS OF SERVICE.

At a time like our own, when the opportunities of the Christian ministry are questioned by many, it gives one fresh confidence in it to review so signally attractive and influential a pastoral service as that of John K. McLean.

The foundations of this success were laid in the town of Framingham, Massachusetts, whither—after a brief service of the Congregational Church of Fair Haven, Connecticut (June 5, 1861, to October 27, 1862)—he was called to become pastor of the Hollis Evangelical Congregational Church, January twenty-sixth, 1863, over which he was installed on the nineteenth day of the ensuing February.

There was nothing conspicuous or unusual in the manner in which the young pastor began his work. He did not do that for which in later years he criticised a young minister, “attempting a lot of new things before he had come to know his people.” On the contrary he went very quietly and modestly to work to understand and serve his parish and community. The care and devotion with which he accomplished this is indicated by such incidental evidence as that contained in a letter to him from the veteran pastor, Dr. Nehemiah Adams of Boston, who wrote in answer to an inquiry sent him by Mr. McLean concerning a member of his parish: “I

wish that all were as careful as you are, dear Brother, as to whom they admit." This carefulness, however, was on the score of character rather than of orthodoxy.

The strong and vital interest of the young pastor in the larger concerns of the community, as well as of his own church, and at the same time his sturdy independence and common sense, are indicated in a vigorous address (afterward printed) given by him at a meeting of the Worcester and Middlesex Temperance Union, in which he laid stress upon the power of public opinion as an absolute necessity for securing temperance reform.

What we need for an effectual opposition to intemperance, to put a check and finally a stay upon it, is public opinion—a good and sufficient motive power, but beyond that, strong laws. \* \* \* Let us perfect our law in every detail—bring our utmost Yankee ingenuity to bear upon it. Then let us \* \* \* turn the whole might of this tremendous power, which God has given us wherewith to do Him service, in upon the machinery of law.

Still more indicative of his public-spirit and patriotism, as well as of his patience and charity for those under criticism, was a notable Fast Day Sermon, preached by Mr. McLean at Framingham, April 30, 1863, and published by request. In this sermon the young preacher boldly rebuked the spirit of complaint and gloom then so rife, declaring:



We are unduly despondent in view of the real and exaggerated dangers of our situation. We are distrusting God's power and willingness to deliver us and give us victory. We are allowing ourselves to grumble over the hardships and evils incident to our situation, and are both directly and indirectly complaining at the allotments of God's providence. We are practically opposing the authority of our legitimately constituted rulers, and seeking to subvert their lawful authority. \* \* \* I do not mean to be understood as saying that we are bound to submit to whatever our rulers may impose upon us, in silent, meek acquiescence; that we are to believe all their measures to be the wisest, best and most effective possible; or that we are never to presume to criticise or express a dissenting judgment. What I mean is, that in such a complicated Government as ours, in such an unprecedented emergency as this, it is utterly impossible but that mistakes should be made; and it is not wrong for those who are capable of doing it, to criticise these, openly and fully. But this should be done fairly; it should be done intelligently; it should, above all, be done *charitably*; keeping in mind the vast difference there is between sitting, coolly, safely, at a distance, and watching the progress of events, with nothing to do but watch; and plunging into the thick fray, and ourselves *shaping* events there, amid the turmoil and



confusion, the heat and dust and smoke and blood of actual conflict. We may judge our public men and their measures; but we should, in doing it, use that same *charity* the gospel enjoins upon us to exercise toward our neighbor. But for the people to give themselves up to indiscriminate, querulous, discontented *complaint*—that is a wrong and a sin. The same wrong and sin, today, as it was in the day of Moses and Joshua and Caleb. Such conduct, at the best of times is folly, is sinful. At *this* time, it is more; it is a most *grievous* sin, next door to treason!

The Framingham pastorate was not so much interrupted as supplemented by the service performed by Mr. McLean under the United States Christian Commission at City Point, Virginia, from January to March, 1865. In this ministry of good will he was aided by one of the deacons of his church, Mr. G. W. Bigelow. The little journal relating their experience is full of interesting glimpses of our soldiers in camp and incidentally of the service which was done for them, in writing letters, distributing Christian literature, holding services, and ministering to discomforts and ailments, physical and mental. The air, blue with oaths, cleared at the presence of this pastor and deacon; men who were trying hard to lead a Christian life under stress were enheartened, and, under the encouragement of their words, some struck out for a higher life. Carefully treasured among Dr. McLean's

letters are several in yellow envelopes, marked "Soldiers' Letters," full of characteristic soldiers' thanks and good will for help and sympathy received.

The following record of a day in camp gives a snap-shot of the work of the Commission and of the method and spirit of this particular man in the doing of it:

Up at seven. Prayers. Wrote letter for Robinson to Mrs. Hathaway concerning her son Charles, sick in hospital. Gave Gould can condensed milk. Breakfast. Calls at door for paper, newspapers, envelopes, ink, thread. Wrote letter for James Brown to sister. Sold stamps. Gave painkiller to green man for ague and kidney complaint. Major and Mrs. Tucker called. Walk into Headquarters for mail and nails. Stayed to dinner. Going in met ——— about a furlough; showed me a letter from his wife; his little girl sick. Back at three. Fixing cannons. Called at Major Tucker's. Gave tracts to ten men, recruits, testaments to some. Sold stamps to three or four. Took ten dollars in state bills to exchange for U. S. Received \$2.00 for Christian Commission, \$1.00 for stamps, \$2.00 to get a writing book for ———. Supper. Painkiller to boy for swelled face. Took pocket books for two boys to keep. Franked letter. Lent magazines. Preached; Prov. 1; eight or nine soldiers spoke. Nine or ten rose for prayers. Talk with Miller

till quarter to ten. Outbreak in chapel. Picket-picking. Gave lantern to hang in chapel. Man with swelled face. Picket fires on hill.

The Framingham pastorate of four years was laid down in July, 1867, to accept a reiterated call to the Congregational Church of Springfield, Illinois. This call resulted from a visit to that city which Mr. McLean had made in the course of a journey to "The West." For Springfield was at that time regarded as a western city, full of enterprise and hopefulness as the capital of an opulent and growing state. It was no accident that led this man to turn his face westward. All that was best in the "western spirit" awoke a response within him. He left the shadowy elms and saintly characters of New England with regret, bearing with him many evidences of affection and gratitude, but convinced that his life work lay in the needier and more promising West.

The church in Springfield had been but recently organized. It was worshiping in a room in the State Capitol building. The community was as yet somewhat inchoate, outwardly and inwardly. There was limitless work to be done, limitless opportunity. The life was vital and pliable. The situation called out the best in the virile young minister. It was the turning point in his ministerial life, as he himself recognized in looking back.

Four years after his going to Springfield, Mr. McLean wrote to the Framingham Gazette sev-

eral chatty letters in which incidentally he drew so life-like a picture of the two towns, one so typical of the New England of that day and the other of "The West," that two or three extracts are here given, both for the sake of their own interest and their reflection of the spirit of the writer.

Messrs. Editors: For the twenty and more weeks that your paper has appeared, a regular Monday morning visitor at my home, with its large bundle of Framingham news to unfold, and displaying before our eyes its array of familiar names, it has been in my mind to drop you a line, if no more than to tell you how welcome the visitor has been and how like an old familiar friend it seems, in this far off place.

We take our regular Monday morning drive about old Framingham by this means, stopping here and there to look off at some of its beautiful, well-remembered views; chatting here and there with a friend; seeing who is building new, who is repairing old, who is painting over and whose new fence is building. For a half hour each week we thus live once more back amid the old scenes and cherished fields. But then, a look out of the window disenchants us, and we are again on the flat and boundless prairie; the matter-of-fact, bustling, pushing West has reclaimed us.

How we are carried back to the old Town Hall (wonder if it has ever received

that fresh coat of white paint and graining that selectman Hurd aspired to see, removing somewhat its *suspicion* of dinginess), back to those preliminary meetings down stairs when a self-constituted "Lecture Committee" met to discuss the possibility of a "first class" course in Framingham; to the crowded array of upturned faces, glowing and corruscating under Willett's "Sunshine," wrapped in wonder at Curtin's gleaming sentences, or listening gravely to Bellows and Manning and Holmes and the rest. And then, can I ever read of lectures to be heard in Framingham without remembering with tumultuous gladness those after-lecture "chocolates" which sent their grateful steam of fragrance up around the lecturer's head—what time story, repartee and "laughter unextinguishable" manifested itself therewith? I hope not; even though to remember must forever now leave, after the gladness, a sadness full as deep.

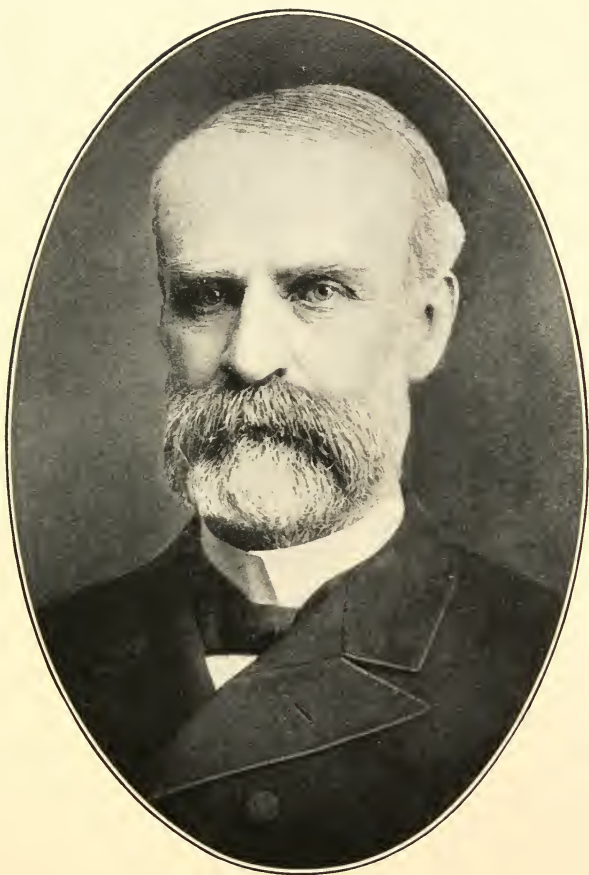
Perhaps Framingham would not object to making the acquaintance of this town. We have no bushy lanes to take you through, we have no smiling Concord, we've no tree-crowned acclivities, no Bare Hill nor Normal Hill to show you sunsets from; nevertheless, some things which even such a petted beauty might think worth looking at.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now, Miss Framingham, if I may have the pleasure, this is Springfield, Illinois. Twenty-one years old last February; with a population, within the two miles square of city limits, of 17,500; in the township of 20,000.

The chief interest which any stranger takes in our city, of course centers about the name and home of Abraham Lincoln. We will go there first. It is but a short distance from the center of the city, no more than six or seven blocks, on the corner of Jackson and Eighth streets, a plain, unpretending structure, standing close upon the street. You have seen the picture of it, doubtless, so I need not describe it.

As we pass back from the Lincoln house to the public square, we step into South Sixth street; which is, on the whole, the handsomest street. It stretches for more than a mile out south of us, lined on either side with roomy, substantial and some very elegant and expensive houses. Each house has a quite large lawn about it, well kept and filled with shrubbery. In May and early June, while roses are in bloom, this street and some others are even marvelously beautiful with their wealth of color and perfume. In December it is not especially inviting. As we pass through it today, the street is dry and dusty as summer, and the wind hurls clouds of dust down toward us. In December usually it is anything but



JOHN KNOX MCLEAN  
AT FIFTY-FIVE





dusty—mud, deep, fat and black, holds almost undisputed sway. \* \* \* \* \*

Well, we have little more to show you. Our seven railroads now running, with two others in construction, and three more projected would be no rarity. Nor our nineteen churches, nor our fine Leland Hotel. Framingham, as Westerners say, "don't go much on hotels, no how." There is nothing else of interest except our coal shafts and I doubt whether Beauty would care to descend one of those—200 feet in a black basket into a black hole! We have four of these just outside our city, each lifting two to four thousand bushels daily. \* \* \*

And now, my dear Framingham, good bye. Do come and see us again soon. We will have some more things to show you, I hope. If you should conclude to move West, we have a few, a very few choice building lots left, which to YOU, we would dispose of on very easy terms. We want no more settlers now except *choice ones*.

It was not long before a church building had been constructed with special adaptation to the work of the Sunday School, which was under the enterprising leadership of Mr. Herbert Post, "*the seats in which, by a unanimous vote, are all to be free,*" as the Springfield daily paper announced in italics. The adoption of free seats is indicative of the democratic character of the sympathies of the pastor. It was one of the qualities that brought him into touch with the people.

No man's success or failure—that is, no married man's—can be understood without taking into account that great factor in his personal equation,—“*the Mrs.*” as certain wise, if uneducated, persons call her. The mistress she often is, the maker, or at least the moulder, of a man's character and career. Especially potent in her influence is the mistress of the manse.

In Sarah Matilda Hawley, of Salem, New York—between whom and himself the first tie had been formed in the romantic days of school life—whom he married June twenty-sixth, 1861, Pastor McLean found a comrade and co-worker of such character and such rare gifts and graces that he might have said of her as did Ferdinand of Miranda, “of whom I gained a second life.” A member of the Springfield church wrote of her:

She came among us a stranger, but was soon known, through the fascination of her character and personal appearance. With grace and graciousness of manner, she immediately attracted and ever continued to win, as the qualities of her mind were discovered. She was very attractive to the young. Happy are the memories of sunny days spent at the parsonage. The infants of the church, too, could lisp her praise and tell of the wide-spread table to which they exclusively were invited. Over all she exercised a healthy influence for good through her refinement, both of nature and of culture. Her modest and unpretending home

was made artistic and beautiful by the taste of its arrangements, and though inexpensively adorned, would attract the attention of the most fastidious. The spiritual elements of her character, added to these other qualities, made a completeness not often found.<sup>1</sup>

With these two leading it, no wonder the Springfield church prospered. The congregation grew; the influence of the church widened and deepened. In a very true sense it was a successful pastorate. The pastor had passed through lowly doors of service into a large place of influence and power.

The gifted and eloquent John Henry Barrows, who was Mr. McLean's successor in the pastorate of the Springfield church, once summed up the latter's influence in Springfield in the following words:

John Knox McLean came in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ and brought with him an energy that led and inspired your own—an executive and managing ability that is rarely equalled in the ministerial or any other calling, and an independence of thought that kindled the respect of people accustomed to think for themselves. He spoke out his own views boldly and you liked him for it. He scolded you roundly and you knew that love was behind the censure. You leaned confidently on his strength and permitted him to do many things which, as he now be-

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<sup>1</sup> *Church Record*, Vol. XIV, No. 9.

lieves, you ought to have done yourselves. Around him clustered all the activities of this young church. He accomplished for you and for this community, and for the churches of Christ in this region, a work which has made his memory a blossoming fragrance in many hearts. The pulpit will never be deemed a decaying institution, a relic of former power, so long as it is filled with manly, devoted, well-trained, capable and progressive men—of which class your pastor was a noble type. May I not rightly apply to him the words in which our greatest poet sings of another Springfield citizen:

“How beautiful to see  
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,

\* \* \* \* \*

One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,  
Not lured by any cheat of birth,  
But by his clear-grained human worth  
And brave old wisdom of sincerity.”

## CHAPTER III.

### A PASTORATE OF POWER.

In the summer of 1871 Mr. McLean made a visit to California. He was a traveler always, ardently fond of scenery and deeply interested in humanity in all its types and activities. He had followed the construction of the trans-continental railroad with great interest, had already been as far as Omaha in the service of expanding Congregationalism, and was eager to see the new world that lay beyond the great rampart of the Sierra Nevada. The reality far exceeded his anticipations. He was delighted with the splendors of the rich and wonderful land that sloped from the Sierra to the Pacific. Not that he coveted it for his own, or cherished a thought of disloyalty to his Illinois home, but there was henceforth a glamor over California which exercised a strong drawing in that direction. He was impressed, too, by the great need and opportunity for religious work which it afforded.

When, therefore, a call came to him, not long after, to the pastorate of the First Congregational Church of Oakland, whose pulpit he had supplied for several Sundays during his stay in San Francisco, his heart responded. But he felt deeply the ties which bound him to his Springfield church and declined the invitation. When, however, as in the case of the Springfield

church, the call was urgently renewed, accompanied by letters which showed that the leaders of the church felt very strongly that he was the man under whom they could best fulfill their task, he yielded to their conviction and his own desire and accepted the call.

The Oakland church at that time had had a brief but promising career. Its history, as outlined by Deacon Edward P. Flint (one of its earliest and most active members) at the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary is, in part, as follows:

In December, 1860, the First Congregational Church was organized, by seventeen persons. They were a little band of earnest devoted Christians, who freely gave their time and substance to the service of the Lord, and I have always felt that the high character and success of the church from the beginning until now has been due to the fine character and loving spirit of its founders and their successors. I have never known a church so wisely administered, and with such harmony and unanimity of action on all subjects. For the first year, in 1861, church services were held in a small building erected by the city on the Fourth street side of a public square on which the county court house now stands. The roof of the pavilion was so leaky that umbrellas were sometimes raised, and it was understood that on stormy Sundays services would be omitted.

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Rev. George Mooar, pastor of South Congregational Church in Andover, Mass., accepted the call of the church to become its minister, and arrived in San Francisco by steamer via Panama, May 6, 1861, with his family. Soon afterwards, by the favor of a few members, aided by F. K. Shattuck, who, though not a member, was a warm friend of the church from the beginning, the church was enabled to purchase the block of land lying between Broadway and Washington and Tenth and Eleventh streets, for the sum of \$14,000. On this lot, fronting on Broadway, was erected a building which cost between \$8,000 and \$10,000. It was completed and occupied March 22, 1862.

A very pleasing custom was inaugurated by the church people, and was continued for several years. The men gathered at the church on New Year's morning, bringing their garden tools, and made a complete clearing up of the grounds, which was quite a job on the block of 200 by 300 feet. The wives and daughters were also on hand to provide an ample luncheon. The sight of these people beautifying the garden of the church was interesting, and declared their love for the Lord's house. \* \* \* \*

In the summer of 1871 we heard that Rev. John K. McLean, pastor of the Congregational Church in Springfield, Ill., was visiting California with a party, and we succeeded in securing his services for sev-

eral Sundays. The church became interested in him, and after his return to Illinois a call was sent to him, which he at first declined, but after a renewal of the call it was accepted, and Mr. McLean removed to Oakland with his wife in April, 1872, and was soon after installed as our pastor, continuing in this relation to the church until April, 1895, a period of 23 years.

From this time the membership of the church grew rapidly, and in 1877 it was found that a new church edifice was needed and could not be built too soon. Half of a block of land, fronting 200 feet on Clay street, and 150 feet on Twelfth and Thirteenth, was purchased for \$20,000. A payment was made on it from funds in the treasury, the money required for the building to be provided by a sale of the land at the corner of Washington and Tenth streets. Plans for the new building were obtained from a noted architect in New York through personal interviews by the pastor and one of the trustees, who met for this purpose in New York. The chapel of the church was finished and occupied October 14, 1878, and the auditorium was entered January 12, 1879. The total cost of the building with the pews and furniture was about \$80,000; and today, after thirty-three years of service, it is in as good condition as ever.



This story of the church organization and building is the outer counterpart of an inner up-building of a remarkable nature, begun under the pastorate of Dr. Mooar and carried on under that of Dr. McLean.

Dr. McLean's Oakland pastorate of twenty-three years was in all respects a rich, in many respects a great, pastorate. It is hardly too much to term it one of the most fruitful in the history of the church of America. Beginning with a membership at the time of Dr. McLean's arrival of 241, it attained a membership of 1183 in the year the pastorate was laid down. During his pastorate Dr. McLean received into the church 2473 members, 1234 by confession; an average of over one hundred a year. The benevolence of the church mounted from \$2,612 in 1871 to \$19,788 in 1889. Figures tell but a small fraction of the story. The far-reaching, down-rooting wholesomeness, pervasiveness and productiveness of this pastorate was its strength and its glory—the way it took hold of the church, the congregation and the community and moulded, sweetened and constructed its life.

It was an eminently statesmanlike as well as Christlike pastorate. Study, for example, the way in which the pastor extended his strong and extraordinarily elongated spiritual arms around the different individuals, ages, groups, organizations of his church, guiding and supporting them all. The influence of the pastor over the strong men of the church and community—to begin with that—was notable. Men of power in the

community, administrators, business men, educators, lawyers, physicians, rallied to his leadership.

Young persons, especially young men, felt the attraction of his manhood, and gladly put themselves under his sympathetic, idealizing touch. Few pastors, or for that matter teachers, have gathered about themselves so closely, or influenced so formatively, a group of talented and able young men. From boyhood to young manhood and well on toward maturity he guided their development, helped to fashion their ideals and stimulated their highest capacities. The enduring loyalty which these young men, now occupying positions of trust and influence, felt for Dr. McLean, and the acknowledgment of their indebtedness to him, constitute one of the richest rewards which a man could have for generous and unselfish service. Among them, three are eminent in university work, three occupy positions of large influence in the Orient, several are political leaders whose probity is as fine as their influence, one became Governor of the State of California, many are prominent in business circles, and several are in the ministry. A more signal instance of multiplied manhood could not readily be found. A number of young men, under Dr. McLean's supervision, organized a society called "The Yokefellows," meeting fortnightly, which took upon itself the tasks of conducting a mission Sunday School, assuming charge of the evening service of the church, visiting the hotels with invitations to the church services, and similar enterprises.

It is one of the incomparable prerogatives of a true pastor that, like his Master, he can not only summon the strong to the battle of life but heal the hurts and ills of the wounded. Dr. McLean bore the sorrows and struggles of his people. He prayed for them and with them, in the pulpit, in the home, in his own room. What this ministry of prayer meant, let such a letter as this from a woman who gave to the world one of the greatest minds of American philosophy indicate:

It is now more than eight years, since in the providence of God, I was led to attend, at first occasionally afterward more regularly, upon your ministry. From the first I felt myself greatly instructed and strengthened by your teaching and your prayers. As time went on, you were made by our gracious Lord, the means of unspeakable consolation and help to me. Many a time when I entered the sanctuary with broken heart and surrounded by clouds so dense that I could see only one ray of light and that when I looked up and said, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord," many such times have your petitions borne me up into the light and comfort of our Heavenly Father's love. Thoughts and desires which I could not express, it was given you, by the Holy Spirit to utter, and as my spirit ascended with yours in these petitions, answers of help and light came down.

And then his service to the children! If it were not that the statements already made belie the assertion, it would hardly be too much to say that the children were the objects of Dr. McLean's sole and undivided care and interest. In reviewing his pastorate in 1900, he wrote: "The second pastor found this field (the children), to be the most inviting portion of his charge." The Sunday School was his pride and joy, and he kept in very close touch with it, always keenly alert to its enlargement and improvement. He had an aesthetic as well as gently human and pastoral fondness for the little tots, whom he called his "pansy bed." The beautiful custom, introduced by him in his church, of having the little troop from the Kindergarten file in at the close of the morning service to share the benediction, has been adopted in a number of other churches.

"When I have heard Dr. McLean read a chapter of the Bible and pray," said his friend, Mr. Samuel T. Alexander, "I had a genuine experience of worship."<sup>1</sup>

The shepherding of a large parish in such a way as to keep in touch with all, interested in each—not superficially but personally—impartial, alert, sympathetic, capable of reading character, interpreting needs, drawing out confidences, is a splendid and difficult task and calls for gifts and acquirements of the highest order. "To be all things to all men" one must have a great deal of wholeness himself and must exercise a very generous use of all the capacities within him.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. E. S. Williams in *The Pacific*.

Dr. McLean had an excellent memory for individuals. This was not merely a gift; it was due in large degree to the habit of concentrating his mind upon his people that he could recall the name of the latest baby and the face of the most recent newcomer in the congregation. But he did not rely wholly upon his ability to reach each of his parishioners separately. He made judicious use also of methods of influencing individuals in groups and through self-multiplication. It was his custom, for example, to address a friendly New Year pastoral letter to those who had united with the church during the year. From these letters he succeeded in abstracting the formal, wholesale tone and injecting an unusual degree of the genuinely personal interest and atmosphere.

One of these printed letters is here reproduced in part:

STUDY FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,  
OAKLAND, Dec. 28, 1881.

*To those who have become members of  
our Church by Confession, in 1880  
and 1881:*

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

There are nearly two hundred of you who are thus addressed. In your spiritual welfare and progress I am most deeply interested. So that I can almost literally write you, as Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, "God is my witness that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." I have tried to shape our

public services as much to your instruction and profit as I could. I should have been glad to have maintained a much more full and intimate acquaintance with your experience and progress could I have done so. This, in the care of so large a church being impossible, I feel impelled to adopt this less satisfactory method of acquainting myself somewhat more fully with your religious welfare. As most of you are young in years as well as in the religious life, I am for that reason the more solicitous to know how you are getting on. I hope well. I shall not be surprised, however, to find that some of you have met with obstacles, hindrances, temptations and doubts. In these, I ask to be permitted to help you if I can. But to be able to help you I need to know as fully as possible of your experience and condition.

To this end I send to each of you a copy of this circular letter and most earnestly request of you to send me each a reply. Please tell me freely and frankly of your religious life. Your letters will greatly aid me in directing my ministrations in the months to come. If you have had a uniform and growing love for the Savior, and joy in his service, please let me know it, that I may rejoice with you. If you have found difficulties, discouragements, hindrances and trials, will you not as frankly speak of these. It may be that I can help you overcome them.

In a word, please confide in me fully and frankly as your friend and pastor, believing that I am sincerely interested in you and desirous to help you all I can, and that any confidence you repose in me I shall most sacredly respect.

The year is about to end and a new one to begin. Will it not be wise and well to begin the new year with some *special* desire and special endeavor to have a new and fuller consecration to the Lord Jesus?

With most earnest wishes and sincere prayers for you all, believe me,

Your pastor and friend,

J. K. McLEAN.

Here is a clue to one of the secrets of Dr. McLean's influence—a religious experience of his own which opened to him the wealth of the Divine life and love, and a sympathy which enabled him to mediate that love to others. What wonder that when his study door at the church was opened wide, with an invitation, to any or all who would, to come, at certain hours, for advice and counsel, a stream of all sorts and conditions of men poured through, to emerge strengthened, cheered, and with clarified vision. The good accomplished by these hours of consultation can never be estimated. It was a genuine spiritual clinic.

Among Dr. McLean's parish records are two large, well bound books, which were once blank books but long since ceased to be such,



the one marked "Marriages" and the other "Deaths." The record is complete from 1873. The care with which the entries are made furnishes a model for pastors—and others. The frequency of the funerals attended in the latter years of his ministry is almost appalling, reaching sometimes seven, eight or nine a month—an average of one every three or four days. When one recalls all that such a record means of the strain of self-sacrificing sympathy, it tells its own story.

On the other hand it is pleasant to note that the number of weddings equals, if it does not exceed, that of the funerals—a total in the fifty years of his ministry of nearly thirteen hundred—the number married thus doubling the number buried. Thirteen hundred homes set going under the smile and with the kindly interest of this good friend! Who will compute what that means?

The following description of the church and its pastor, which appeared in a religious journal, gives a vivid picture of both:

The First Congregational Church of Oakland has been for years the head and front of Congregational churches out here, a tower of strength to Congregationalism and to all its weak and struggling sisters. It is a large, generous, wealthy, working church, which has done a grand pioneer service in Oakland and on this coast as the nursing mother of all good enterprises. . . . In some respects Dr. McLean stands





JOHN KNOX McLEAN  
AT TWENTY-SIX



unrivalled out here. He is an expert organizer, and especially fertile in methods of interesting and enlisting the young. In all social amenities he is thoroughly at home. As a moderator or chairman of a public assembly, few men anywhere evince so much ability, are of such ready speech, such genial temper, such quickness of thought, such playful humor, carrying an auditory as one man, and handling the machinery of a public meeting with the ease of a "master of assemblies." All this, added to a clear enunciation, a far-reaching melodious voice, and a manner which enlists the hearer,—all this *tells* in a new community, where people of the most diverse antecedents often meet together, not knowing whether they are of one mind or many, or what any one thinks on a given subject.

In 1876 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon Mr. McLean by Knox College.

At the close of the twentieth year of this far-reaching pastorate, the church sent out to the members the following card of invitation:

YOU ARE MOST CORDIALLY INVITED  
TO BE PRESENT AT THE  
EVENING PRAYER MEETING  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF OAKLAND  
WEDNESDAY EVENING  
April 27, 1892

at which time the exercises will be in recognition by the church of the twentieth anniversary of the commencement of Dr. McLean's pastorate. One feature of the occasion will be the delivery to the pastor of a "Twenty-Year Mail," for his private reading, to which all who are so disposed are invited to contribute. This feature is expected to be a "surprise" and you will please consider it a matter of confidence.

By Direction of the Church Committee.

The letters making up this mail bag are enough to overwhelm the objections of those to whom the Christian pastorate is a useless and worn-out sentimentalism, enough to turn the head of an unstable man, enough to make a seraph sing. Space permits only a few quotations. This was from a teacher, of the best New England training, long prominent as principal of the Oakland High School:

I wish to express in the most emphatic manner my deep obligation to you for what you have done for me spiritually. I fully realize upon what unknown seas I might have drifted had there not been a guiding hand near.

A lawyer, occupying a place of trust and esteem, writes of his thankfulness to God,

for making it possible for you to preach such a sermon of retrospective gladness as that of this morning and for the unanimous response of gladness and hearty approval from all our hearts.

A woman of refinement writes feelingly of—

thankfulness for the help of which you are doubtless unconscious. I cannot explain it to you except that it is a wish to be my best when near you.

Another said:

I never had so many coats put on me that fitted,—some of them right snugly, but the better appreciated on that account and adds: The prayer-meetings have been a means of helpfulness. I have carried from each some 'stick' which has not only added to the warmth of my own heart, but helped to make the home fire blaze more brightly.

A German, struggling with the language, writes:

No wone in yur church can be more thank Full than my Wife and my Selfe. I have ofent thought how God has Led me on For these 11 years & had it not Ben for you I properly Wod not Be A Christian to Day.

A little girl declared:

I just feel as if I would like to see you every day and have a nice talk with you.

A mother writes:

If it is any joy and comfort to have lifted the clouds from darkened lives into the clear light of spiritual trust and hope, then may that joy and comfort be yours.

(Signed) One who has been so helped.

A young man spoke of the high aims of Christian manhood which had been inspiration to him. And so the story goes. If human aspirations and efforts after the higher life mean anything, such testimonials cannot be less than an evidence, not only of the character and wisdom of this great-hearted pastor, but still more of the activity of "a Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" and of the responsiveness of human hearts and lives.

That other churches were aware that there was power in this Oakland pastorate is evidenced by the calls which came to Dr. McLean from the First Church of Honolulu in June, 1881, and from the First Church of Los Angeles in August, 1887.

One of the most thoroughly Christian features of this great and vital church which grew up about Dr. McLean was its democratic character. It was a church of the people. The rich and poor met together; the educated and the uneducated. Dr. McLean loved the working man and won him, and thus prepared the way for the strikingly outspoken and successful ministry to Labor of his brilliant successor, Charles R. Brown.

When Dr. McLean closed his pastorate of twenty-three years, to accept the presidency of Pacific Theological Seminary, September, 1895, —preaching in the morning on "Life," and in the evening on "Joy,"—a wave of gratitude and affection swept not only over the church but the whole city. It found worthy expression in

the following editorial in the *Oakland Enquirer*, with which this chapter may fittingly close:

*The Enquirer* comes not to bury Caesar but to praise him—a little. In the nearly quarter of a century during which he has been the pastor of the First Congregational Church, Dr. McLean has exerted a greater aggregate influence for the betterment of this community than any other man it has contained. No one else has labored so long, so constantly, so judiciously and so powerfully for the uplifting of the things which are good and for the condemnation of the wrong. Many strong men—some politicians, who thought they held the key to the welfare of the community, others, able lawyers, who have made and unmade great causes, some brilliant scholars, who addressed themselves to the most intellectual classes in our midst, along with numerous others, each wielding power in their own way—have come and gone, but the quiet, persistent influence of one church, in the end, outweighs them all. Many other things have made more noise, each in its day, but that day was usually short and when it ended Dr. McLean and his church were still there, standing as ever for those things which are of good report.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PARSON AT PLAY.

The best workers are frequently the best players. People have often wondered that a man who carried so many responsibilities and bore so many burdens and shared so many heartaches as Dr. McLean, could keep so young and buoyant, like a day in spring. For he was one of those men who grow younger as they grow older, and at the dread age when so many begin to wrap the mantle of their couch about them, he was still—as Dr. Henry Van Dyke (one of his comrades in travel) described him, in *Out of Doors in the Holy Land*,—"a tall, slender youth of seventy years."

The springs that lay at the source of the flowing freshness of Dr. McLean's life—faith in God, love to men—could not have flown so freely had it not been for a very wise though simple means of keeping them open,—the habit of recreation. He was an adept at knowing how to "throw dull care away," and take it up again, no longer dull. Good fellowship, clean mirth and plenty of out-of-doors were all very dear to him.

His love of nature, deeply implanted in boyhood, never left him, "She (nature), has us," as he once said, "in our opening hours, wholly, at first, partially ever after. There is nothing



to which the youngling clings as to a flower or some bright shell; there are tremulous memories in them of his last thousand years."

One more sensitive to nature than he, I think I have never seen. Whoever walked with him in his later years, at least, had to be content to stop every few moments,—at the cost of a complete break in the conversation,—to observe a peculiar light in the sky, or a flower by the roadside, or a shapely tree, or some other beautiful wayside sight. His was not the interest of the naturalist, but of the nature-lover, whose eye is in love with life and beauty.

Dr. McLean had not been long in California before he discovered and appropriated, as his friend Joseph Le Conte before him had done, that spacious and beautiful playground, the Sierra. He was one of the charter members of the Sierra Club, an early contributor to the *Sierra Club Bulletin* and several times joined the annual outings of the club.<sup>1</sup> His favorite campground was in the shadow of the splendid cone of Mount Shasta, upon the banks of the McCloud River. Here he drank in strength and fresh air and inspiration in such draughts as renewed his youth like the eagle's.

Upon all who could enjoy this life in the woods he eloquently urged its benefits; to such as could not, he made it so vivid and real as almost to produce the illusion that they had seen it all with him. In the paper, *Multitude and Solitude*, to which reference has already been

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<sup>1</sup> A vivid description by him of autumn coloring in the Sierra entitled "Upper Sacramento in October," appeared in the second number of the *Bulletin*.

made, is this picture of such a camp in the forest as suited his taste :

Let it be the deep and solemn woods, a place of great trees, where the fir grows, and the sugar pine, queen of the forest, the yellow pine, prince consort to the queen, and noble cedars. Let it be among the mountains. If it be where some great ice dome dominates the lesser peaks, so much the better. Not to stay in sight of the great monarch always, but where on occasion can be caught, all on the sudden, the face of him; and where he is seen in partial disclosure rather than in full. Let there be a river; not too large, but of full banks, clear, cold and impetuous; a river that could drown you, and cheerfully would, if it got the chance; there must be some spice of danger, else no true sense of solitude. Let this river be fringed with azaleas; outside of these, the great-leaved shield-saxifrage and ferns in shady spots. Before your abiding place let sun and shadow mingle in equal parts. Be near a spring of water. Let the camp be somewhat environed with shrubberies; vine-maple, dogwood, hazel bush,—their brighter green in most grateful contrast with the deeper tones.

Do not go utterly alone; one or two with you who can without embarrassment sometimes be silent; long silent if occasion may require, but who can talk, too, when the

mood is on. A good Indian serves well on some accounts. He understands the art of silence and can practice it without burden to his feelings. He can give you points in wood lore, and introduce you to some fine features of the solitude other guides might miss; besides, he is himself a son of the solitude and fits in well with the surroundings. If not an Indian, then a poet, if you know a sane one. There was such an one once, who by the sunshine of his presence illuminated the atmosphere of this Club; and whose presence made the sunshine brighter everywhere. What a comrade he was! How with him one could spend whole days in silence unreserved, without embarrassment; and again beside the camp fire talk through long evenings or for half the night sometimes over the smouldering ashes. How he loved the forest solitude! What varied culture he had garnered from it. How he could open its inner meanings to neophytes like some of us who went with him, page by page, chapter by chapter, scarcely with words at all, but by his own deep gladness and visible comprehension of it. But he is gone, and all the forests are poorer for it. Yet one should not say that either. It is not wholly true. Mountain and wood mourn him, yet his invisible presence abides in them everywhere. It can be felt in places where in bodily presence he never went. Whoever was privi-

leged to wilderness-comradeship with Professor Sill will keep that comradeship unbroken and living so long as there are forests to visit, and he is permitted to visit them.

Your material surroundings bent to your mind, settle down for six weeks' stay at least; not a day less will suffice for much. Stay as much longer as you can. Abide in this retreat meekly. Do not set up to be the superior intelligence there, which you are not; be content to have footing as the inferior, which you will very soon find you are. Go not to lord it over your little brethren of the wood, Nature's other children, but to be their guest; not even to learn about them, but to learn from them. Draw closely to these gentle neighbors, obeying, with reference to them, St. Paul's injunction to esteem others better than yourself. For they are better. Every one of them, and their name is legion, is, up to the measure of his calling and in his way, fulfilling God's will more perfectly than you.

And if you are to gain anything in this place or to gain anything in Nature's precincts anywhere, you must provide yourself with open mind, "alert to observe, but above all things else ready to receive whatever of truth, power or spirit, Nature has to impart." Nature's meanings are not to be strained after, only yielded to, not grasped, only to be received by instillation.

The allusion to Edward Rowland Sill, for whom he cherished so warm a friendship, should be supplemented by the description which he gave of the California poet before the Berkeley Club, as the ideal camper, adducing this unique and conclusive evidence, *that he always took his half of the loaf, no more and no less*. When these two were together in the Sierra, they called each other "Dan'l Boone" and "'Ik' Walton," the poet representing the latter. This tribute of Dr. McLean to the camping qualities of Mr. Sill may well be accompanied by one which was once paid to himself by Governor Pardee, who said, "I have camped with him and I have fished with him. He was always calm, cool and serene. When the coffee was short and the bacon bad, it was always accepted by him with the best of spirits."

At the foot of Mount Shasta, as has been said, was Dr. McLean's favorite camping place. But let it not be inferred that he was content to remain at the foot of Shasta. That was not his way. He must make the ascent. The account of it, published in *The Advance*, closes thus:

A tin cup, a lump of condensed beef-juice, some melted snow set simmering over one of the sulphur steam escapes, and we are ready. It is dizzy work. At first, it is like climbing up the gutter of a high-roofed house. Then the gutter abruptly ends, and there is nothing for it but to take the ridge pole. On one side the climber can feel tol-

erably comfortable. It is only the height of a church steeple, off there. But as he conservatively cranes his neck in the opposite direction, he draws back aghast. There is a sheer, unbroken leap of many hundreds of feet. Thousands on thousands, it appears to him. He instinctively flattens himself to the cliff like a lizard, and wishes he could sink his finger-nails two inches deep into this crumbling rock! His nervous poise is not helped on at all by the coming and going overhead of sundry vicious, little puffs of wind, which whirl up out of the under-eddies in the rocks. Baby tornadoes these seem to be, sent up here to nurse and be trained, against such time as they shall be grown up and called for over in the great basin of the Mississippi. As playful as kittens are they, and perhaps as harmless. But as they frolic with one's hat, and set such loose ends of raiment as he has about him whirling and flapping playfully, it really appears a rather serious game to him. He would much rather be excused just then. It requires no great stretch of fancy to see one of these mountain zephyrs gently lifting one off the rocks, and sending him headlong down that awful abyss. A few yards of this experience, and the terminal point is at last attained. The nerve-shaken climber sinks down with a feeling half-exultant over his success, and half-repentant, under conviction of his

folly in having ever thrust himself into this terrific spot!

Deeply attached to the Sierra as was this lover of the mountains, he was not in the least provincial in his devotion. He loved the Rocky Mountains only less than the Sierra. The Alps, too, were full of fascination to him. In 1886 he climbed Mont Blanc. Among the interesting descriptions of his travels abroad which he wrote for the *Oakland Tribune*, occurs this vivacious and picturesque account of the Gemmi Pass:

The Gemmi Pass is one of the most frequented and, by common consent, one of the grandest of all Alpine passes. I was obliged to take it alone. The other six were set on Berne and its bears, Freiburg and its organ. The two routes were, in our plans of travel, incompatible. Besides, the morning was drearily wet and it was difficult to justify the wisdom of anybody attempting such an ascent on such a day. The matter must be decided however during the half hour from Interlaken to a landing called Spiez, on the Lake of Thun. Comb and tooth brush had been clandestinely conveyed into my pocket, in case the weather should clear, umbrella and water-proof were kept free, and I watched the clouds. The steamer speeds its way, and still the sky lowers and the rain comes down. I am made the subject of endless derision as a specimen of the drowned-out



Alpine climber. I say to myself, "If the sun shall show his face for so much as the single thousandth of a second before this boat touches the wharf at Spiez I will take that for my token and try the pass." Within thirty boat's lengths of the pier the sun for a single instant did peep out. It seemed to me he looked square at me and winked. It was enough. I grasped my water-proof, said some hasty good-byes, and before the astonished bear-lovers could get their breath they were being paddled off toward the Bernese bear-pits, and I, in a one-horse vehicle, was driving toward the wonderful pass of Gemmi.

After describing his approach to the pass, he continues:

In half an hour we were in thick clouds. The fir trees were dripping, as in a heavy rain storm. Beard, horse's mane, overcoat, were rimy with moisture. The two dozen people met making their descent looked like drenched chickens. The voice of waterfalls presently was heard. And this was aggravating. For two or three cascades leap, the guide books say, off this mountain-side into a beautiful valley and lake twelve hundred feet below. A fine panorama is also visible here under right conditions. "To the northeast the jagged Birrenhorn; to the east the glistening snow mantle of the Blümlisalp, the beautiful Doldenhorn and the barren Fisistoeke; to



the southwest, between the Meschinthal and the Gasternthal, stands the lofty Gelli-horn." It was the reading of sentences like that which had led me to decide against the bears and the organ pipes and to choose the Gemmi. And here I was among it all, and couldn't for fog, see a foot beyond my horse's nose. I thought of six dry, warm people who had had their supper and were standing at ease about a bear-pit in the comfortably level streets of Berne, feeding the strong smelling creatures with ginger-snaps. It seemed almost as though firmness and perseverance do not always get their due reward. But regrets were vain and I put them by. In another half hour things improved. We left the fog below us. The fog, and the trees, and all growing things. There was an upper stratum of clouds still above us, but high above us, and the level beams of the evening sun were putting them into rapid commotion. Occasionally at first, then continuously, these melting clouds would open and shut, and disclose great towering peaks of snow and ice. The effect was to make these appear very much higher even than they really were. It was an amazing spectacle. I did not long for the bears now a bit. I totally forgot I had had no supper; almost that I was wet and cold. Those vast, white gleaming pillars and pinnacles of silver, tinged to rose color under the

setting sun! It actually seemed as though one were being caught up into a seventh heaven and permitted to see things of which it were not lawful to tell. It was the journey through doubt and darkness up into mystery. But mystery outlining most solid and glorious certainty. One's feet stood on the rock. Enough was disclosed to enchain fancy, kindle imagination and confirm faith. These are the very battlements of heaven. It will not be strange to see them teeming by and by with chariots and horsemen.

The sun went down. The lifted upper clouds closed in again. Darkness began to gather. The cold grew almost bitter. The bridle path was bordered with desolation. No living thing remained, not even moss or lichens. A shallow, barren-shored lake is reached, which is glacier-fed and is said to be frozen over for seven months in the year.

Adjectives now became impotent and useless. I will let them go, and without color merely name some of the things which are to be seen. The inn stands at an altitude of 7,553 feet, which involves a far greater degree of cold and desolation than an equal height among our Sierras. It occupies the gap between two mountains (the ears of the mule), which spring abruptly 2,000 feet on either side above it. Around one of these horns or ears winds an

enormous glacier, which melts within half a mile of where we are to sleep. Beyond that again rise a long line of snow peaks from which the glacier gathers its material. All this is very impressive. We are evidently near the heart of things. But in front of us stands the marvel. First, a perpendicular cliff drops 3000 feet, with wall as sheer as any in Yosemite. Below lies a green valley dotted with houses and spotted by a village. Then is disclosed the great Rhone Valley. And, towering beyond that, forty miles away, the Alps Valais. Over all these things there rests, in this glorious twilight, no particle of cloud, or mist, or haze. The air is transparent as ether. The Valaisian Alps are seen upon their northern side, on which, of course, the snow lies deepest. The horizon, for a full quarter of its whole circumference, is occupied by them. There are not less than ten peaks which rise above 14,000 feet. There is the Monte Rosa group, the huge Weiss horn, the Brunneckhorn, the sharp, sky-cutting pyramid of the tragic Matterhorn, and another great group culminating in the Dent Blanche. I may live a thousand years, but I shall never see such another sight. Long after sunset these distant peaks glowed as though they had been heated to a red white heat.

Doubtless it troubled some of Dr. McLean's loyal friends to have him so ardent a fisherman,

—for fisherman he was up to the very last of his ability to land a trout, at the age of seventy-seven. And a successful fisherman at that; he himself admitted it in the account he once wrote of "The Parson's Piscatorial Success," in which he "modestly but firmly" set forth how, in a fishing contest in the Rocky Mountains, "the parson came trailing his spoil after him, victor. None had so many fish, none so large as he. How many and how large, I forbear to state. I do not wish to throw any shadow of discredit upon this veritable history."

Being an unsuccessful devotee of the same "gentle art," the writer will not venture to condemn the fishing parson. The Old Adam, or the excusing Peter, or the everlasting Boy, or something, rises up too strongly in him as he reads the good Doctor's unregenerate words: "Oh, what riffs and ripples! What deep-lying holes among the rocks! And the gleams of gold that greeted his eyes every now and then out of those depths. Yes, and what golden gleams shot out of them right into the parson's very fingers! Into his fingers do I say? Into his very soul I might have said, where they scintillate still. . . . Not once but many times has he caught that string of trout. It hangs suspended on memory's top-most peg,—a thing of beauty and a joy forever."

A characteristic word of Dr. McLean's, ancient fishing, has been preserved by Mr. Charles J. Woodbury who once overheard the Doctor reply to a tender-hearted lady parishioner who

was remonstrating with him upon the cruelty of fishing: "Madam, if I drop my line into the water, and any living creature comes along and disputes my right to it, I shall resist his claim to the very best of my ability." A sufficient answer, from the point of view at least of the old political economy.

One of the best results of these vacation days was the generosity and success with which the beneficiary shared them. The sermon following his vacation, as he returned "staggering under the weight of impressions" (as he once put it) could be counted upon to consist chiefly of vivid pictures of scenes and experiences he had enjoyed. The members of the First Church of Oakland came to regard themselves as proprietary owners of Mount Shasta, the McCloud River, and all the forests, flowers, streams and springs pertaining thereto, through "this Apostle of the Sierras, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the Royal Shasta," as Mr. C. Z. Merritt once dubbed him.

They took all their pastor's wider journeys with him, too, and became citizens of the world through his eyes and mind and heart. Thus Europe, parts of the Orient, the Holy Land—whose resemblance to California he was very fond of tracing—became vivid realities to many to whom otherwise they would have been but names. Others beside his own people, too, shared these travels, through public prints and addresses.

The *quantum* of theology and exhortation his congregation received may have suffered limitation thereby; but many grew to be lovers of nature and of humanity, of beauty and of truth, as they could not otherwise have become. Nor did his congregation ever complain that they were not thus listening to true sermons, for upon whatever subject Dr. McLean spoke in his pulpit, he preached, and the people went away, made better, enlarged in mind and heart. This out-of-door ministry finds fitting expression in lines entitled, "A Shepherd's Mountain," addressed as a birthday tribute to him by Miss Irenè Hardy, and published in her volume, entitled "Poems."

"Forbid me not, O friend, in birthday words  
of praise,  
To speak in allegory thus of you,  
With this excuse,—to wish you joy and  
length of days.

There dwelt a shepherd, once, beside the sea,  
And much, they said, of books and men he  
knew;  
But all his wisdom fragrance had of wood  
Or field or mountain; words of his could be  
Poetic with the waving of a flowering tree,  
Or strong and serious like the bitter-good  
Of herb medicinal; or they could move  
With the majestic motion of a cloud, to  
prove  
Majestic truths; but oft in parable they  
burned

With mountain images sublime, aglow  
With light that always is; and oft they  
turned

To holy solitudes upon the heights, to show  
That men might learn, like him, to go  
Where they could meet with God, and know.  
And now his words, men thought, of Shasta  
seemed,

And now with some Imperial Mountain  
gleamed,

Whereof he knew the secret places best  
That give the souls of men supremest rest."

"In the great contest of Hush against Rush,"  
as he once phrased it, "Nature stands serenely  
confident of her ground." And he stood serenely  
with her, hushing the fevered heart of life with  
a calm caught from Nature and the God of  
Nature.

## CHAPTER V.

### GRACE SEASONED WITH SALT.

It is not often that pastor and preacher blend, in the same man, in complete balance and symmetry. Either the pulpit dominates and the shepherding lags, or the pastorate shines and the preaching does not. Doctor McLean united pastor and preacher. If the pastor was of the two the greater, the preacher finely reinforced and supplemented the pastor.

It is not easy to overestimate the way in which these two offices of the ministry, when thus matched, aid and fulfill each other, exerting thus a redoubled influence. Such an influence Doctor McLean exercised over his own people. Far beyond his own parish also he was known and felt through his pulpit—a pulpit which became a power for righteousness in the city, helping to mold its standards, political, social and moral.

The preacher himself was well described in an Oakland paper as follows:

Fancy a man tall, straight and somewhat spare in build; with features betokening a Scotch ancestry, with hair, cranial and facial, silvered neatly by Time's magic touch. Eyes not decided blue nor gray, searching, stern in glance or kindly, as occasion may warrant. Voice of manly timbre, hypnotic, disciplined. Bearing dignified yet unaffected. Manner reserved,



and still inviting. Language concise and precise. Unpedantic, not prolix, unassuming, aristocratic in carriage and demeanor, yet democratic in address. Not a hide-bound bigot in argument, disposition fierce, cruel, mean, but a gentle, patient, tolerant, eloquent, conscientious theologian. In civic life thoroughly imbued with progressive spirit, observant, sympathetic, sagacious, active, parental. Oakland is indeed to be congratulated that it numbers Dr. McLean among its citizens. He is a Christian whose daily life is honorable in every detail, whose motives are ever noble, whose words and deeds in his vocation, and in his private transactions, are those of a gentleman of the most eclectic stamp. As a preacher, he is doing lovingly, generously, benevolently for his flock, and the sphere of his endeavors is not limited to his official jurisdiction. For the seeds that he sows are sent broadcast. His influence is always uplifting.

Dr. McLean's conception of the *rationale* of preaching was incidentally but clearly given in an informal address which he made to a company of fellow ministers who once gathered under Mr. Miller's hospitality at the Hotel Riverside for a few days of rest and conference. Speaking to this company of the way in which the Bible makes its great appeal, Dr. McLean said:

It is experience appealing to experience. The higher, richer, fuller experience speaking to a lower, less extensive. It is experience taking advantage of certain conditions that are common to the communicator and the recipient, and making these the vehicle and instrument of imparting a richness known to one but as yet unknown to the other.

The same might be said of the pulpit at its best.

If one were to attempt to enumerate the characteristic marks of Dr. McLean's preaching, perhaps the first to be noted would be its manly, direct, straight-forwardness. There was no use of catchy colloquialisms, no cheap talking down to people, no sensationalism, slang, nor striving for effect; yet his pulpit utterance was terse, homely, pithy, arresting. He took people where he found them, showed them to themselves and set forth the truths and values of the higher life in an original, clear-cut, convincing manner. These qualities are well illustrated in a striking sermon upon "Faith Overcoming the World," an extract from which follows:

I am frequently asked, as being comparatively a new-comer here, how I like California. I have no stereotyped answer to give, but if the thousand and one replies I have made to the question were to be condensed into a single one, it would, I suppose, be something like this: "I like California very much; I like its climate, its

scenery, its people; but I'm afraid it's a rather hard country to do church work in." You see, California is largely a matter of churches with me. They furnish the standpoint from which I look and the spectacles through which I look at things. Some of the rest of you, I am afraid, might talk all day upon your impressions of California and never hit upon the subject of churches! Precisely so with the world, as the individual man's faith meets it in conflict. My faith has to do battle in a world of my own, your faith in a world of your own; and so with every other man.

I, for example, as a preacher am standing aloof from business; am under no stress of temptation on the side of commercial dishonesty. I am not, by my calling, flung into temptation with men who are taking the short cuts to money getting. It takes no particular "faith" for me to be honest in dealings, for I have no dealings; there's no pressure against me on that side. If in my position I were to turn out commercially dishonest it would argue special badness in me; for I would have, as it were, to go into it in cold blood, of malice prepense; which is a great deal worse than merely to yield under pressure of temptation. I'm under none of the temptations which beset fashionable people; of setting up for style and trying to rival my neighbors in display and equipage and all that.

If my faith had no pressure except what comes against that side of it, I'd be glad. I don't have to fight against the things which attack men in political life. Nobody thinks of offering me ten thousand dollars for my vote. Nobody wanting to be U. S. Senator puts into my hands any wads of greenbacks to carry to a friend to start a bank with, or lets me have Pacific Railroad stock below par! In placing favors "where they will do the most good," no lobbyist thinks of including me in the distribution. It takes no particular power of faith for me to stand clear of all such things. I may steer clear of them and still be as "worldly" as any of the men who are overcome by them. Not being vanquished by them, I may be vanquished by the "world." My "world" obstructs me upon sides altogether different from those. But here's a man who is in business and has started out to be a Christian in business; to be, whatever else he may fail in, honest and truthful and square in dealing. He finds it perhaps slow work getting on, on that basis. Some old acquaintances,—no sharper men than he,—have gone into stocks and shot up like rockets and have not come down yet but are still scintillating in the most brilliant of styles. Men all around him whom he knows to be less honest and less reliable than he are building up large fortunes and getting ahead famously.

It takes a good deal of faith—of seeing Him that is invisible—to keep that man enduring. “The world” takes that man’s faith just where it passes by mine. He deserves a hundred times the credit for keeping his integrity that I do.

Dr. McLean’s pulpit stood as the chief public exponent of righteousness in the midst of a new, growing, and by no means Arcadian community and he was well aware of the responsibility under which this placed him. With courage and plainness of speech he upheld the old tradition of the pulpit as the place for outspoken and vigorous rebuke of wrong in every form. Dr. Wendte, pastor of the Unitarian Church of Oakland, writing in a Unitarian journal of Dr. McLean’s church, under the title, “A Metropolitan Church,” said: “He speaks without notes, uses direct address, seeks especially to impress the young people of his congregation, makes great use of the topics of the day, and always on such themes displays great sense and a fine moral and spiritual insight.”

Impure politics, intemperance, dishonesty, vice in every form, received just and scathing rebuke from this pulpit. Selfishness, especially in the form of luxury, was plainly dealt with; not with empty denunciations but in the endeavor to protect men and women from its fatal effects. In a sermon, afterward printed in one of the Oakland papers, from the text, “Love not the World,” Dr. McLean declared:

The uncontrolled luxuriousness of our age is a thing to be looked upon only with sorrow for the present, and with the most anxious forebodings as to the future. We are suffering to-day, here in America, here in California, here in Oakland, here in this First Church and congregation, from overlove of the things of the world. . . . In the legal sense, in the political sense, the wealthy man's wealth is his own. No one can question his right to it, nor his right to do with it what he pleases. The law must protect him in all that. But in a higher sense, in the moral sense, in the humane sense, in the gospel sense, the wealthy man's wealth is not his own, no matter how honestly he came by it, nor how honestly he holds it.

Whether preaching strong sermons to strong men, or tender and playful sermons to children—for it was his habit for many years to preach a brief sermon to the little folks—this trained and skillful preacher never failed to be *concrete*. He was an adept in the use of apt illustration. Sometimes he would construct a whole sermon about the suggestions skillfully drawn out of a single object, or group of objects, as in a sermon on "Trees" and in his well-remembered sermon on "The Orange." His children's sermons were upon such topics as "Sunflowers," "Butterflies," "Goldenrod," "Winged Ants," "Little Preachers of the Wilderness." In this last, he instanced the mason wasp as a preacher

of "wise forecast," the yellow jacket of "fair play," the midge of "making the most of opportunity," and the caddis of "immortality." One of his friends has said of him: "It seems to me the admirable pastor was at his best on his big church platform with a hundred little children about him." One of the most striking of his children's sermons found its way into print. It was on "Fog Children," and was, in part, as follows:

What I wish to say to you this morning is that there are two kinds of fog. One kind which God makes, another kind which we make ourselves. It is of this last kind that I must speak. It settles down, not upon the hills and trees and plants, but upon our spirits and our temper. It is not an *outside* fog, but an *inside* fog. It makes darkness, not over the land and in the sky, but makes darkness in our minds and in our homes. It is just as chilly and uncomfortable and dismal a kind of fog as the other. If anything, it is more so. Did you ever see any fog of this kind, boys and girls? Do you know any children about your size and age who are very apt to be out of sorts a good deal of the time,—impatient, and discontented, and grouty, and rather cross and touchy? If you have ever seen that kind of boy or girl you know something about this second kind of fog. It is always foggy weather where such children are. They are little fog-making machines. It is foggy at



home where they live, at the school where they go to school, on the play-ground where they play, and a small cloud of fog even goes along the street where they go. They are regular fog children. One can almost hear a fog-horn groan whenever they speak. It is dreadfully dismal. Don't you think so? We cannot manage the outside fogs; we can these inside fogs. We cannot with our hands make a chimney through the mist, up to where the sun is shining; but we can make an opening right up through this other vapor, down which the sweet sunshine of God's spirit will come and make our whole mind and heart and soul—yea, and body, too, like a warm, bright May morning.

It was one of Dr. McLean's delights to ferret out some obscure but vital fact, or incident, or character, and with artistic and human touch, bring out its real, though hidden, significance. One of the best-known sermons of his later years was upon "The Man with the Pitcher," (Mark 14: 13-15), in which he gave to that little appreciated individual unique reality and made of him the type of a class of the least known but most serviceable persons in the Kingdom.

Another marked characteristic of Dr. McLean's preaching was its catholicity, freedom and breadth of outlook. There was nothing narrow, negating, repressive in it. It had the freshness of the out-of-doors and the breadth of vision of the mountain tops. Provincialism



was utterly alien to the man. A wide reader, he kept in touch with current life and literature, and especially with men and events. His study was a place to face world problems, not to shut them out, and his mingling with men was to learn as well as to teach.

In looking through the long list of his sermon topics, one is struck by the variety and scope, ranging from intimate messages to the soul to discussions of world issues and cosmic problems. If on one Sunday his sermon was upon "Glorious California," the next it was upon Forgiveness of Sin." Yet who would say there was no connection between the two?

His sermons to young people throbbed with the spirit of hope and glowed with noble vision. The subject of a sermon at Stanford University was, "Shamgar: Living at the Top of Our Possibilities." A baccalaureate sermon at the same university was entitled, "The Noble Army of Intercessors," from the text Isa. 59: 16-17. A stirring sermon to the graduates of the Horton School of Oakland in 1897, on "Purpose, Plan, Power, Prayer, Perseverance"—a pod of P's, as he called them—presented the principles of a well-directed life with peculiar pertinence, perspicacity and persuasiveness.

Unquestionably one of Dr. McLean's most characteristic sermons was that preached at the sixty-fourth anniversary of the American Home Missionary Society at Saratoga, N. Y., June 3, 1890, entitled, "The Fountain Opened in the Midst of the Valley," (Isa. 41: 17-20). Broad

and statesmanlike in scope, vivid in feeling, graphic and picturesque in diction, it depicted certain aspects of California, natural and spiritual, in an incomparable way.<sup>1</sup>

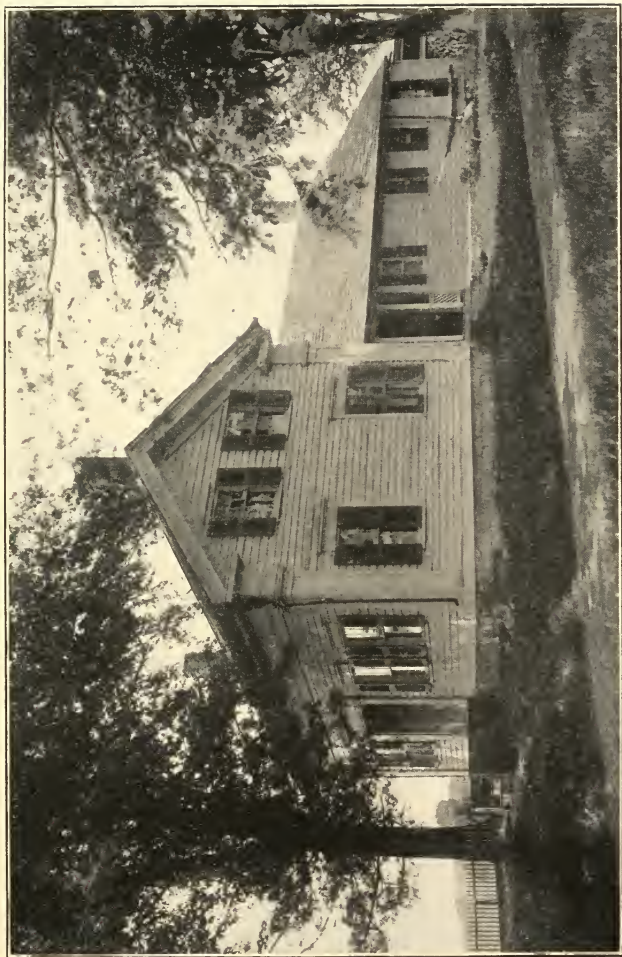
With these robust intellectual qualities, revealing breadth of outlook and knowledge of men, one would hardly expect to find also the mystical temper, the spiritual insight which is the secret of the most intimate power of the pulpit. And yet this spiritual quality was not only present in Dr. McLean, as we have already discovered, but it was the heart and soul of his preaching. One has but to look through the list of his subjects, preserved with great care in two long blank-books, and then to taste the quality of his sermon notes, to find that they were spiritual messages and not discourses about religion.

This is the side of Dr. McLean's preaching that one finds reflected in the little booklet, "Earnest Words from Helpful Sermons," printed by the Ladies' Aid Society of the First Church in 1887, and in the "Extracts from Our Pastor's Sermons, from the Note-Book of a Hearer," published in the *Church Record*. Here are swift insights into spiritual truth and disclosures of personal experience of rare worth. Among such gleanings, taken from "Earnest Words," are these:

It is not at our Bethels that God comes down to us; it is only at our Bethels that we wake up to God. We talk of our times of meeting God, of the day when God first came to us. We mean by it only the time

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<sup>1</sup> The sermon was published in pamphlet form by the Society.



HOUSE IN WHICH DOCTOR MCLEAN WAS BORN



when we came to our senses and saw God. Our real successes come as the Kingdom of God comes, without observation. Neither can we say to them, "Lo here," or "Lo there," for behold they lie, as the Kingdom of God does, within us.

Men do not stumble, by any lucky accident, into goodness. They become good only through purposing, through determining, through resolving, to be so. But if they fail with a purpose, what would they do without a purpose?

In an attractive sermon on "Consider the Lilies of the Field," Dr. McLean drew this comparison:

I think this to be the great lesson of the lilies—their glory an inward glory lodged in their very spirit, streaming out from their life—a part of the lily's self—not an adventitious beauty, but an inherent beauty, all the good they could get woven into their being. Here is the mistake men make in ordering their lives,—they do not compel the great good, God furnishes, in the service of spirit; they do not vitalize it and make it a permanent part of themselves. They are content to be like artificial flowers,—like a stick with paper blossoms stuck into the earth, in which is no life, which has no perfume, which the first shower smashes into nothingness, a pretense of glory, and not real glory.

The note-taker for the *Church Record* caught and preserved many gleams of spiritual wisdom, —these among others:

You cannot test Christianity by treatises, nor by comparison with other religions, nor by philosophy; but if you can, for one glad hour, one glad minute, enter into the consciousness of that love which says, "Come unto me," you may indeed know it.

Hopes do die, it is true, but not without estate. And not without will and testament, in which we who cherished them are well remembered.

Many of the dark problems of this life never will be solved for us here. If we expect to know it all, it is as if those who saw the foundation of Cologne cathedral should have expected to understand the whole plan to its completion; or as if those who saw the half-completed plan should expect to know the perfected structure and all its secrets.

It is not Death we need to fear but Life. Living is the solemn thing, not dying. Dying is but letting go.

As an ampler illustration, both of the matter and manner of Dr. McLean's preaching, the following extract from a sermon preached at the conclusion of his fortieth year in the ministry will serve better than any attempt at description:

"One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my

life; to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His holy temple." Psalm 27: 4.

The forty years' life of this church happens to synchronize almost precisely with the forty years of my own life as pastor. On that 9th of December, forty years ago to-day, when the devoted company of seventeen persons gathered in the little sanctuary, still standing on Ninth Street, to unite themselves in Christian fellowship, I—all unconscious that an event was taking place which, more than almost any other that could happen, was to shape and qualify my life—was a student at Princeton Seminary, close upon my graduation. In those same subsequent days in which Dr. Mooar was breaking his heart and the hearts of a deeply attached people by preparing to depart out of a New England pastorate and come over here to nurse and succor this infant church, I was concluding an arrangement with some people in an altogether different frame of mind about entering a New England pastorate, —in order that having served due apprenticeship I might, later, come and be Dr. Mooar's successor and the inheritor here of his noble work.

So the occasion is to me one of double review and I know no words which one could so fittingly adopt for a motto after making such a review as those words in the first part of this passage: "One thing have I desired of the Lord"—one thing supremely desired of Him—"that will I (supremely) seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."



In that "house of the Lord" which, as a novice, I entered forty odd years ago, I supremely want to stay. It has been to me a goodly connection, full of all priceless satisfactions. I don't want to lose my holding there. I hope to be known as of that guild, or that company, all the days of my life. Here, before you, I beg to revoice that aspiration and to reavow that unalterable resolve.

"That I may behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in His holy temple." That's the vocation and the natural history of a soul in process of true religious development; such a soul is a beholder of the beauty of the Lord and is seeking to inquire still further "in His holy temple."

There are three things I would like to briefly say in relation to the matter of the intensive religious growth.

1. The first is that such growth will consist primarily in the development of moral perception.

Since, therefore, religious truth makes its approach on the side of spiritual perception, the first and basal growth in religious life will be increase in the capacity for such perception.

It is not, of course, that the truth itself grows. For God's truth, like God Himself is infinite from the beginning, and so has no room nor call for growth. The real growth is in the perceiving soul, in its capacity for perception. And it is to this perceiving capacity that truth progressively unfolds itself. And the thing of chief



importance to be said to you here is that this increase of capacity for the perception of truth may be made perennial. There is, to the soul which, dwelling in the holy temple, makes itself qualified to perceive them, absolutely no end, no limit to the possibilities of truth-disclosure. In the fixed sciences end and limit may be found, but not within those lines where truth is vital. Here no truth is circumscribed and no truth is final; but at its topmost advance it is still germinal, like all the living twigs on all the living vines and living trees and living shrubs to-day in nature. Every one of them, even those farthest up in the bleak northland, is cherishing, snugly wrapped in from wintry storm and cold, next spring's leaf-bud. Every twig which has life in it, holds within a prophecy and preparation for the bursting forth of more life. Next year's leaf, next year's blossom, next year's fruit,—they are all lying simply dormant to-day; ready to waken just so soon as spring shall give the signal. Like that is the higher truth in all of its departments and all of its ramifications. Nothing is final. That which seems so to-day, or this year, or in this generation, will to-morrow or next year or next generation disclose itself as only germinal. And so normal religious growth is at its initiative a dwelling, steadfastly, in the household of the Lord, with earnest purpose and patient setting of the mind to behold the beauty of the Lord, and still further to inquire in His holy temple.

2. With accruing capacity for spiritual perception, comes increment of spiritual energy. First, power to see, and with it, power to do. "Abide in me," said Jesus to the disciples. "Abide in me and I in you." "I am the vine and ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." Capacity is given him; an ever increasing amount of capacity. The three-year-old vineyard may be expected to yield some grapes; that which is four years old, to yield more; but, under proper culture, in six or seven years, much more. "Greater things than these shall ye do," said Jesus again as He was about to go away. That is normal Christian development; with a continually increasing disposition and ability to *know* more, a correspondent increase of disposition and ability to *do* more.

3. Naturally upon these two in normal Christian growth follows increased volume of being. To *see*, to *do*, to *become*; that is the established order in true religious development. Increase in volume, in tone, and in quality of being. Perennial increase in quantity and quality of spiritual being,—that seems the final goal in religious development.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BUILDER AND ADMINISTRATOR — PIONEERING, INSTITUTION BUILDING AND ADMINISTRATION.

“John Knox McLean: Eleven years a Christian minister in the Eastern States; thirty-three years in California; seventeen years president of the Pacific Theological Seminary; since its beginning, member of the State Board of Charities and Corrections and since 1906 its president. Of statesmanlike oversight regarding the organization of professional education; patient guide and counselor of young men, marked with his own virility; effective supporter of all good civic causes; sturdy man of wisdom and common sense.”

With these words the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon President McLean by President Wheeler at the fiftieth commencement of the University of California, May 17, 1913. Well considered emphasis is laid by them upon one of Dr. McLean's chief traits,—his wise and statesmanlike constructiveness. He was a pioneer, a builder,—one of the architects of the Pacific Coast civilization.

This kind of service was due to no accident. It was the man's own chosen and cherished work. Writing to Mayor Mott of Oakland, one of his First Church boys, after his own life work was completed, he said:

I had ten times ten rather be the builder of a vital, worthful, permanent structure which has promise of life, than to merely conduct the biggest finished thing which the skill of man can construct.

He was quite willing to leave the pinnacles to some one else, as he once remarked to the writer, if he could only have a hand—out of sight though he might be—in laying the foundations.

His own churches in Springfield and Oakland, especially the latter, were, of course, Dr. McLean's chief pioneering achievements. True, the Oakland church was already firmly established at his coming, and under the wise and gracious care of his predecessor, Dr. Mooar, was growing normally and vigorously. Nevertheless, his characteristic methods, his new, fresh lines of work, his original and unique adaptations to the community and environment, gave to Dr. McLean's pastorate the freedom and individuality of a pioneering enterprise.

Work like this was by no means confined to his own field. He was closely connected with the wider interests of his denomination. He was a delegate to the First International Congregational Council, which met in London in 1891, and Assistant Moderator of the Second Congregational Council which met in Boston in 1899. He was also a corporate member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and a vice-president of the American Home Missionary Society. Though without permanent official appointment, he was practically the

General, the Bishop, for many years, of the churches of his order in Northern California; counselor and participant in the formation of almost every new church, in the choice of pastors and the settlement of difficulties, he gave himself generously and whole-heartedly to the tasks of a wider ministry. As his friend, Rev. E. S. Williams, wrote of him: "No one from Puget Sound to Coronado Beach ever carried the churches of Jesus Christ on his heart more tenderly or listened more eagerly to their calls for help. With the very light of Heaven in his face his serious feet were on God's earth for service. If a country pastor had an erring boy who had been long enough at San Quentin, John Knox McLean would look up the facts and spare the time to go and see the Governor in his behalf."<sup>1</sup> As moderator of church councils, conferences and assemblies, he served as sky-pilot on a multitude of occasions, rough and smooth. In raising church debts he was a Samson and was often called upon to rend the lion of approaching bankruptcy.

For many years he was a Director of the California Home Missionary Society and was president of the California Chinese Mission from its formation until 1901. In the charities of Oakland he was keenly interested, and, more than any other, was the founder of the Associated Charities of Oakland and its president from 1884 to 1894.

His constructive service for higher education was second only to that in behalf of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Pacific*, March 4, 1914.

church. He was instrumental in the establishment of Pomona College and for ten years a trustee. Whitman College in Washington and Pacific University at Forest Grove in Oregon felt the strength of his hearty support and counsel. For several years he was a trustee of Mills College and from 1887 until 1897 a Director of the State Institution for the deaf, dumb and blind. In the remarkable up-building of the University of California, through his intimacy with Presidents Daniel C. Gilman, Horace Davis, Martin Kellogg and others of its leading men, and through his influence upon the students and in other ways, he was a strong force in the life of the institution. In extending congratulations to him upon his seventieth birthday, President Wheeler wrote:

I appreciate more than I can tell you, what you have been to the university and the university community, and what you have been to me, as stay, counselor and friend.

It was, however, in his service to Pacific Theological Seminary, of which he became president in 1893, that he accomplished the most important work of his life, next to that of the pastorate. With this institution he was identified from his very coming to California, having been a member of the Board of Trustees since 1872 and its president from 1880 to 1910. This, again, was to a large degree pioneering work. Pacific Seminary was, to be sure, by no means an infant institution when he assumed the presi-

dency. It was founded in 1866 and began its work of instruction in 1869. But its pioneer days were of unusual length. It was obliged to struggle against great obstacles, financial and otherwise, and while it was nobly manned and began its career under three of the largest-minded and most devoted men who ever guided an institution,—Doctors Benton, Mooar and Dwinell,—still its lack of student material, its isolation, and other causes kept it from the development that might otherwise have been attained.

Upon assuming its leadership, President McLean made a thorough study of the history, assets and opportunities of the institution and came to the conclusion that the very best plan for its success would be its removal to Berkeley, in order that it might come into as close affiliation as possible with the University of California. In a statesmanlike paper advocating this course, President McLean presented to the trustees the following among the reasons for the change:

To state briefly the conclusion to which my own mind has been brought by long continued study of our situation: We must get at those sources of student supply. We must spiritually fertilize these great university fields. We must open up some straight and narrow path leading out of the broad and traveled road that now carries this great multitude of students into secular life and the secular professions. We must inoculate their atmosphere with some



sort of moral germ. We must gird ourselves, go out into the highway and, in the gospel sense, compel students to come in. We have lived perched up in our segregation long enough.

It was a daring step—especially as it involved leaving a magnificent site on Seminary Hill in Oakland, endeared by long association—and naturally met with serious questioning and firm, though not bitter, opposition. But Dr. McLean took the question out into the open, secured a strong endorsement of leading clergymen and educators and finally carried the day with the good will of all involved. In 1901 the seminary opened its work in a commodious building, not far from the university campus. Not the least of the advantages of the removal—and this, too, was largely due to President McLean—was the hospitable attitude and favorable terms under which it was welcomed by the University.

The seminary being thus securely and happily transferred to Berkeley, President McLean's next endeavor was to lift its scholarship, already good, to a still higher plane, in order that it might maintain university standards. For this purpose he sought, with great care, to secure for the faculty the best equipped men he could find for the purpose.

One of the most far-seeing and eminently successful enterprises of President McLean was the creation of an amply endowed lectureship, to be conducted by the seminary, by means of which



an annual course of lectures upon religious, literary, social and theological topics, second to none of its kind in the country, might be offered for the benefit of the seminary, the churches, university and the community. In this project he found a generous and large-minded co-operator in the person of another of his First Church young men, Mr. Edwin T. Earl of Los Angeles. Through his munificent gift the E. T. Earl Lectureship has become of national, even of international reputation and influence.

This was but one, though the largest, of additional resources secured for the seminary by Dr. McLean. When the great disaster of April 18, 1906, consumed in a few hours the accumulations of years about San Francisco Bay and crippled so many institutions and enterprises, it did not leave Pacific Seminary unscathed. An endowment fund of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be raised by Dr. McLean among his friends, was well in progress when that blinding catastrophe intervened. In spite of the disaster, however, the sum of approximately one hundred and seventy thousand dollars was added to the funds of the seminary during his administration. A gift of peculiar fitness to the seminary was the presentation by Dr. and Mrs. McLean of their beautiful home on Channing Way,—the deed of which was conveyed to the trustees in 1909,—to serve as the President's home.

With these ends accomplished, President McLean, though feeling that it was no time for self-congratulation or for relaxing effort, began to

regard the institution as firmly established and to look forward to its future with joyful assurance. At the inauguration of Professors Badè, Buckingham and Laughlin, January 23, 1905, President McLean in inducting the new professors into their several chairs said:

A generation of men is but the childhood of an institution. Pacific Seminary is a generation old. It has accomplished its childhood. It has demonstrated its right and power to be. It has gained resources. It has won standing. It is no longer a prophecy but an entity, no longer a hope, but a fact. It is indeed drawing well on toward that point where it may lay claims to stand under the divine maxim: To him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundantly. In a word it no longer needs to spend time and strength in wondering if it may live, but is free to go on living, forgetting the things that are behind in a noble outreach toward those that are before,—namely its own sanctified and opulent fulfillment.

The conception of the position and work of a theological seminary cherished by President McLean is admirably set forth in an able and influential paper which he presented before the Conference of Congregational Seminaries of the United States and Canada at St. Louis in 1900. The paper was entitled, "The Presidency of Theological Seminaries," and was afterward published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. In this paper President McLean outlined so satisfactorily the

duties and functions of the then newly established office of the presidency of a theological seminary that his views, embodied in a set of resolutions, were unanimously adopted by the conference. His contention was, in brief, that the duties of the president of a seminary, as of a college or university, should be primarily those of an administrator of an institution. The entire presentation exhibits the alertness and grasp of a business man rather than the tone of a veteran pastor, and yet it lifted into the highest atmosphere the true place and work of the seminary, as indicated in these words:

College work is the higher education, seminary work the highest education. The seminary is a department of the university, its supreme department. Its province is to deal with the loftiest and the most important of all the sciences. Other professions and other callings touch life upon one of its sides, the calling of the minister touches life upon all of its sides.

It is needless to say that the presence, the instruction and the influence of such a man in the daily life of the seminary were priceless. Faculty and students were one in their admiration and affection for their leader. In recognition of his seventieth birthday, the Trustees and Faculty gave him a dinner at the old Palace Hotel in San Francisco over which Professor, now President, Nash presided,—an occasion abounding in the good fellowship and outspoken affection and honor which Dr. McLean's personality

always induced, though never invited. At the chapel services following his birthday the students presented him with a loving cup, accompanying it with the heartfelt declaration: "We love you, not alone for what you have done for us, but for the example you set for us in culture, dignity and saintliness of character."

Following his retirement from the presidency the alumni gave Dr. McLean a book of remembrance, beautifully bound in silk and parchment and inscribed with these, among other fitting words:

Your eighteen years' of service have been fruitful and enriching to the institution and those who have studied therein. The men who have sat at your feet have received such an ideal of the Christian ministry and such a vision of its possibilities as can never be effaced but must add power and dignity to their ministry.

In 1912 Dr. McLean was elected by the trustees *President Emeritus* of the seminary.

Still another work of pioneering, alluded to by President Wheeler, deserves further mention. In 1903 Dr. McLean was appointed by Governor Pardee a member of the first California State Board of Charities and Corrections. He was elected chairman of the Board in 1906, retaining that office until his resignation from the Board in 1910. Referring to this public service after its completion, Governor Pardee said: "To what a high place of effectiveness did he elevate the State Board of Charities and Cor-



MACLEAN'S CROSS  
IONA, ARGVLESHIRE

The oldest Christian relic in Scotland, assigned to the period of St. Columba, a reproduction of which has been set in Mountain View Cemetery, looking out over Oakland and Berkeley to the Golden Gate, as a memorial to JOHN KNOX McLEAN



rections! He was its guiding head and the excellent results he produced will long bear fruit. Above all, he kept that Board in the proper channel. How easy it would have been for it to have become a political nuisance. But never under the guidance of Doctor McLean! The improvements he made are manifold."

Thus this "effective supporter of all good civic causes" laid the foundations upon which other men are building. Pastor Emeritus, President Emeritus, he was also *Pioneer Emeritus*. Yet the man will not easily be forgotten in his work. For he rose head and shoulders above the foundations upon which he worked. And as they rose they lifted him.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LIKE A TREE.

The author of the First Psalm wins universal assent when he likens a good man to a tree, planted by the rivers of water. With every repetition, the words take on fresh truth and fitness. Friends of Dr. McLean have been fond of attaching this comparison to him, owing partly, perhaps, to a certain erectness and symmetry of stature, partly to his own love of trees, partly to a certain calm and freshness in him, as of one living under the open sky. The comparison attaches to him so naturally that we will make use of it in etching some of his characteristic qualities.

His character was firmly rooted in the soil of reverence. From boyhood he was nourished upon spiritual realities. He neither could, nor would, abandon these. From them sprang the stability and sanity and strength of his life. Confidence in the spiritual side of life grew rather than diminished in him.

This is illustrated by his comment in connection with the wide-spread discussion that followed ex-President Eliot's address on "The Religion of the Future," in 1909. President McLean was asked by a newspaper correspondent to express his judgment upon the issue. In his address, President Eliot took the ground that the religion of the future would be, far more



than at present, a humanitarian religion, in which science and service, good will and good deeds would predominate over creed and worship. In commenting upon this view, Dr. McLean said:

I believe that our most regular and best conducted churches are at fault, sadly so—as churches and as members much more addicted to saying ‘Lord, Lord,’ and to eating and drinking in His presence than to seeking out and succoring the outcast, the unfortunate and suffering. So far with Dr. Eliot . . . but no more. I discard no ‘mysteries’ great or small in our current Christianity; more of the supernatural do I believe in, rather than less.

In the case of some men religion seems to lend unnaturalness rather than genuineness, sentimentality rather than strength, to their lives. Not so with Doctor McLean. “The deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy’s” in him, because of his vital faith in God and the eternal verities. He could never look at life merely on its material side, although he did not fail to give that side its proper place. A sagacious comment of his upon the discovery of gold in California was to the effect that:

Next after the finding of gold and silver in California, the greatest blessing to our State has been the finding an end of it. No greater calamity could possibly befall us now—I mean not only morally and socially, but financially also—than the finding of

new deposits equal in richness to the old. Providential goodness is visible, and equally so at both ends, in the gold discovery and in the gold exhaustion.

Out of his faith in the great spiritual verities sprang his ideals, hopes, visions,—that which one of his friends characterized as “his power of seeing things and making others see them.”

The trunk of this tree was as firm as its roots were deep. “Here is a man of integrity,” was the verdict of all who knew him. Although he was prominently before the public for forty years, there never was a shadow of suspicion cast upon his good name. Straight and strong he stood before the eyes of the community, like a sturdy oak or redwood.

“All men loved him; falsehood’s aim  
Did not shatter his good name.”

A normal man is much more like a tree than like a shaft of marble; for, like a tree, he is always *growing*. Born and bred and trained under the old theological regime, Dr. McLean was one of the comparatively few men of his day who passed naturally and happily over into the new order,—a test which so many able and intelligent men have failed to meet.

In the presence of great intellectual and religious changes, many men remain stationary or swing violently, by a process of reaction, from one extreme to the other. Not so with Dr. McLean. Far from radical in his temperament and judgments, he yet had the freedom and cath-

ollicity of spirit to welcome the new day with all the best it had to bring, leaving behind "the narrow ways of the lesser mind." On the whole and especially in later years he would have been called a liberal-conservative, although he was in no sense either a technical or a polemic theologian. Breadth and openness of mind characterized his attitude toward new truth. The larger implications and bearings of evolution, for example, appealed strongly to him. As early as 1889, when so many ministers were attacking evolution, he declared: "Revelation and evolution stand at one."

One of the most interesting events in his career, theologically, was his friendly controversy with his neighbor, Rev. Charles W. Wendte, pastor of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, over the issue, Unitarianism vs. Evangelicalism. The two were excellent friends, and labored together most amicably in the organized charities of the city. But they belonged to opposing camps, theologically, and could not quite forget that they were supposed to uphold their respective ecclesiastical banners. The most striking features in Dr. McLean's conduct of the controversy—well matched, too, by his opponent—were his good nature, on the one hand, his keenness of wit and vigor of assault on the other, and above all the spirit of liberality and progress in which he construed evangelicalism. In a sermon on "The Evangelical Faith," for example, preached in his pulpit January 6, 1889, in replying to the charge

that the Evangelical Faith was in an unsettled state, the preacher said:

Revision and recension of beliefs is both a mark and a means of growth and progress. It is the tree which no longer makes new wood that is marked for decay. And the trees which make wood do also drop wood. You know the forest is my friend and teacher. Well, a regularly orthodox forest drops as many of its outputs as it keeps. Getting done with lower limbs it lets them go, and puts the released vitality into new ones higher up. And so, too, with its rings of sap wood made new each year; the tree crowds off the old bark for a roomier inclosure. But, my friends, all the while, the heart of the tree never changes to another kind of a heart, the species of the tree to another species! I have haunted the woods these thirty years and have never found yet, and never expect to, any amount of growth transforming an oak tree into a birch or pine, or bass wood! Its heart of oak is always heart of oak. Let our Christ-rooted faith grow, manifesting and augmenting its exuberant vitality. I see in that no menace lest it grow the great, divine heart of it out of itself; or lest it transform itself into another species of faith or into any new "world order!"

The kind of influence and wisdom which Dr. McLean possessed would have made him a marked man in many a field. "He was uni-

versal in his tastes and accomplishments," remarked Hon. Warren Olney of him. He was the type of man, as President Nash has said of him, who would have won large influence and success in the United States Senate. As an editor he would have ranked among the men who command wide attention by reason of clearness of vision and pungency of statement. An especially striking evidence of the latter capacity is afforded by a paper of his before the Berkeley Club upon "The Vice of Newspaper Reading." In this paper, after granting to the full the value and advantage of newspaper reading of the right kind and in moderate measure,—declaring that "even the angels might profitably spend some time with a right daily paper,"—he goes on in crisp, telling sentences to point out the vicious effects of newspaper reading as it is generally conducted. He indicts it, in the first place, "as an insatiate and illimitable consumer of time, and of the best time," declares that "the most that is read out of a newspaper by the average reader is not material for thought, or information, or vital interest of any sort. . . ." "The vice of the newspaper," he says, "is that it creates a morbid mental and moral appetite and then furnishes the appetite so created with seductive food which tends still further to debase and debauch." To this he adds: "I do not know but after all the chief viciousness of the current newspaper reading lies in the education of the public mind away from the practice, first, and from the power, second, of any *continuous*,

*consecutive thought.*" The paper is full of good humor and playful jibes; its keenness and force might well be envied by any newspaper man.

Politically and socially Dr. McLean was frankly and fearlessly progressive. A friend of Susan B. Anthony and woman suffrage, he stood for the larger recognition of the place and work of woman long before the cause emerged from obscurity and unpopularity. In a paper read before the Berkeley Club, he strongly advocated the inclusion of a large representation of women on the university Faculty.

When the new social movement began, in the eighties, it found in Dr. McLean hearty sympathy and support. Always outspoken and earnest in behalf of true social democracy, he hailed the message of the prophets of the new day when it first appeared, with enthusiasm, and arranged a course of lectures in his church upon "The Christian State." This was in harmony with his whole attitude toward social progress. The charge of indifference to the social message of Christianity can never be laid at the door of Dr. McLean, or the First Church of Oakland. This man was no reed shaken by the wind. As his friend, Dr. Dille, said of him, one of his most salient characteristics was his dauntless courage: "Gentle as a woman, he was as brave as a lion when the right needed defense or wickedness merited rebuke. He was as gallant a knight of Christian chivalry as ever laid lance in rest. He could no more have lived in a truckling, time-serving atmosphere than he could have breathed

in a vacuum. The distance between such a man and a self-seeking ministry is hemispherical."

From this strong trunk sprang sheltering and beneficent branches — gentleness, kindness, brotherliness, sympathy—and the rest. For, to use one of Dr. McLean's own terms to his students, his was a life of *self-forthputting-ness*. Here was a man naturally reserved,—as his Scotch nature led him to be,—who not only had warm and kindly feelings towards others but who had by dint of long and unselfish discipline mastered the art of expressing them; a man who had learned how to live close to other people, of all kinds, and draw them within the circle of his own abounding sympathy and good will.

To make friends everywhere, and to keep them when made, to hold one's resources and oneself open and ready to give to anyone and everyone, to be serviceable but not cheap, out-giving but not effusive, is one of the finest achievements of life. Dr. McLean won it. His life showed that he had resolved

"To live in a house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man."

Many memorable instances of his unselfish service of persons in the parish and community are recalled by his older friends. One was that of his great kindness to a gentleman whose mind was unbalanced and whose day was likely to be shadowed after the reading of the morning paper (enough surely to cloud any sensitive mind) unless he could be quieted and cheered



by some especially sanitive influence. This office Dr. McLean voluntarily took upon himself, and every morning for a considerable time would, at the right moment, project his cheering presence into his friend's day and thus save it from cheerlessness and gloom. Here was the practice of psychotherapy long before its formal advent.

Effective help was extended by Dr. McLean to persons who were trying to overcome the drink habit. One case in particular is recalled by Dr. McLean's older friends. The foreman of a printing office who was apparently hopelessly in slavery to drink, went to Dr. McLean and after a long talk took the pledge,—not, at first, indefinitely but, by the Doctor's insistence, for a month, then for three months, then for a year and then for good. The owner of the printing plant, upon witnessing the result, declared that if the Doctor would open an establishment for the cure of inebriates he would outdo every Keeley cure institution in existence.

This pastoral genius believed that there is good in every one if only it can be discovered and brought out, and his success in doing it justified his faith. "In the most indifferent, outwardly," he once said, "there is some spark of spiritual life. Some favorable moment makes it grow. Sage brush fields were once thought to be incapable of cultivation. Now it is believed that land which will grow sage brush will, if watered, produce anything." He turned much sage brush soil into spiritual fertility.



Many have borne tribute to the kindness of the veteran pastor; none more fully and finely than his successor, Dr. Charles R. Brown. In his sermon at the fiftieth anniversary of the church, Dr. Brown declared:

Had my own father been named, not for Benjamin Franklin as he was, but for John Knox, and if his last name had been McLean and he had been standing in this man's shoes, with this man's hold upon this community, he could not have done more in those opening months and years of my own pastorate to help establish me in the hearts of this people. And that kindness has been constant and beautiful through all these years.

Among the branches, abundant, umbrageous, beautiful,—the foliage. The true foliage of life, its real attractions and graces, are not superficially attached to one's personality; they grow out of his rooted faith and proper substance. They are the natural leafage of the soul, disclosing its inner life and quality.

That Dr. McLean was a man of faith and integrity and sympathy was indeed the main cause of the beneficent effects of his life; but that is by no means all. Others have had these qualities in as great a degree who have not drawn men to themselves as he did. The winsome and companionable qualities were his, both by grace and by nature. A Scotchman parishioner of Dr. McLean's once described him as a "fu' witted mon." Doubtless he meant

more by this than *humor*, but certainly this must be included as a good part of his pastor's *fu' wittedness*.

It is surely a priceless contribution to this world of human intercourse,—which so many people seem bound to make hum-drum by commonplace treatment of it,—when one appears who looks at life with some degree of originality and comments upon it in other terms than the saw-dust of ordinary conventionality. Dr. McLean added to the zest as well as the genuineness of life by *being himself* and by letting others see that he meant to be himself and to see things through his own eyes. Stale and stereotyped forms of thought and speech never gained control of his native individuality. Even the weather became interesting when he spoke of it.

The sparkle of his kindly wit and genial *com-araderie* has cheered the prosy paths of everyday drudgery, as well as the hours of social companionship, for all who came within the circle of his friendship. At repartee he was alert and keen. Finding him one day in the seminary library with one of the volumes of that once familiar book of Bible comments, "Barnes' Notes, Explanatory and Practical," I ventured to say to him, "What, Doctor, do you use Barnes' Notes?" Quick as a flash came the reply: "I take down my Barnes to build greater."

"Humor is a great buffer," once remarked a Scotch minister. It served Dr. McLean as a

buffer in his contacts with men of all sorts; it served him also as something better than a buffer,—as a magnet. It is not always regarded a token of the distinctively Christian spirit to cultivate light-heartedness and “provoke one another” to fun and frolic. And yet, in Dr. McLean mirth showed its religious side. To provoke a smile certainly is one way of expelling a despondent spirit. He never hesitated to preach and to practise a fun-loving faith. As *The Congregationalist* remarked of him, editorially, “He was the man to whom in the days of his prime local interests of various sorts looked for counsel and support; and along with his multifarious public labors were to be found invariably a sunniness of spirit, a gentleness of approach to others, an unbounded affection that went out to rich and poor, high and low alike.”<sup>1</sup>

He wrote not only sermons, *Sunday-graphs*, that had in them many a touch of playfulness; but also “*Monday-graphs*,” published in *The Pacific*, full of sparkle and of the wisdom of every day philosophy, with comments on life as he saw it in the street and on the ferries and trains. In one of these “*Monday-graphs*” there is a chatty description of a bird store on Kearny Street into whose window he used often to gaze with boyish absorption. In the course of the description he has this to say of the kind of interest he took in nature:

I cannot tell you the names of the birds at 411 Kearny Street. And I am glad I cannot. It so takes away all romance and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. McLean, a *Pacific Coast Leader*, February 26, 1914.

all interest from a bird to be told its name. You can imagine anything you please about it, so long as you do not know what to call it, or whence it came. But some meddlesome fellow comes along, and tells you that the brilliant red and yellow specimen you are admiring is a *Psittacus Cyanocephalus*; or that the singer, whose tones you so much affect, is an *Alanda Arvensis*! What are you to do; the subject is exhausted. You can feel no earthly interest in the bird after you have, so to speak, turned him that thoroughly inside out. He becomes a squeezed orange to you; a plaster dog whose bark you know all about. I once began to study botany; but I had to stop it. There were ever so many flowers whose Latin order, class and species came up before me every time I saw them. What's a flower to you, after you have been made aware that it is a *Nemopanthus Verticillatus*, for example; or a *Castilliga Septentrionalis*, belonging to the general order, *Schrophularipææ*! The consciousness of knowing all about it, so robs the poor flower of beauty and fragrance, too. I am happy to say I have forgotten all my botany before this, and flowers are just flowers to me once more; pinks are pinks, and dandelions, dandelions. I almost lost respect for the biggest Big Tree when it was revealed to me that it was but a *Sequoia Gigantea*. No use to run a string around the trunk after that.

Among these spontaneous products of a wise and happy spirit, is a capital sketch worthy of publication as a tract for Christmas, upon, "The Man Without a Bundle." After a lively description of the people with bundles, the anti-hero appears:

And now, right in the midst of all this hilarity, came the one poor forlorn creature without any bundle, the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not! If he had seemed too poor to be able to have a bundle, I shouldn't have pitied him so much, for then I could have supposed that he had the Christmas feeling within his heart; in which case empty-handedness signifies less. But for a man who *could* have a bundle and had none, there appeared no possible mitigation of misery. He tried his best to look cheerful, and not to appear an object of pity. He whistled feebly. He stuck his hands in his pockets. He stalked off with an air of great bravado. But it was all of no use. He was so evidently Nobody's Man—nobody's son, nobody's father, nobody's brother, nobody's lover, nobody's neighbor—that it was impossible not to discern the fact and to feel due compassion for the fellow. He wore very much the air of a detected defaulter. All the year through he had mingled among folks and managed to keep the forlornness of his condition to

himself. Now, however, like any other crime, it had come out, and he stood abashed.

It was this minister's creed as well as his custom to "put a cheerful courage on" and keep it on. From even a funeral he aimed to banish the leaden hopelessness and gloom. It is related of him by a fellow minister that on one occasion they were called upon to conduct, together, the funeral of a good old man who had been connected with the church for many years. During the service the choir, or some member of it, sang a most dismal and dreary funeral song entitled, "Wandering Down," the refrain of which ran:

"We are wandering down, we are wander-  
ing down,  
We are wandering, wandering down."

The sense of sombreness and dreariness grew deeper and deeper during the singing of this doleful selection until, at its close, Dr. McLean arose to speak, and, turning to the chorister, said: "Mr. ——— I wish you wouldn't sing that song. It isn't true. Our brother isn't wandering down, he's *climbing up*." Whereat the sense of gloom was suddenly dissipated and the light of hope and trust began to dawn.

The tree was not flawless. What tree, or man, is? Not many men were readier than he to acknowledge faults and mistakes and rectify them. The double loyalty to institutions and to individuals is often hard to preserve. Dr. Mc-

Lean may at times have seemed inconsiderate to individuals. If so, it was owing to his sense of duty to the institutions he was appointed to serve.

Such a life cannot be fruitless. It reproduces spiritually after its kind. It is in time obliged to submit to inevitable outward decay, but not until it has looked down on its natural and spiritual successors.

With his warm love for children, it was one of the joys of Dr. McLean's later years to welcome and cherish grandchildren of his own. His only child, Mary, congenial and beloved comrade of her father, married Warren Olney, Jr., of Oakland, on October 24, 1899, and two grandsons, John McLean, born February 23, 1902, and Warren Olney, 3d, born February 25, 1904, came to slip their hands in his and start out in life under his tutelary smile. The arrival, May 22, 1913, of a little granddaughter, Constance Sarah, completed the joy of the grandparents' hearts.

These off-shoots of his own, joining the larger circle of his spiritual children deepened for him the interest of the long future, with its promise of the time when,

"A loftier race  
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,  
With flame of freedom in their souls  
And light of knowledge in their eyes."

As one thinks of the multiplication of spiritual forces and influences passing from the strong



lives that must be cut off, to their successors, one of Dr. McLean's forest experiences comes to mind:

The past summer, in one of my customary Mount Shasta jaunts, I encountered a sight which filled my heart with sadness, and at first almost with dismay. Upon a certain flat, often visited, near the McCloud River, I found a group of noble trees, which for these years past I have rejoiced in, all girdled. Already their tops were yellowing and sickly over with the pale hue of death. I greatly mourned to see these noble friends of mine so doomed, their life currents so cut off. They had been the pride of the forest, and my pride. It was scarcely a fancy of mine, I think, that they stretched out their great arms appealingly to me, who had loved them so well, and so often slept beneath their shelter. I grieved that I could not give them rescue. But, even as I grieved, only a short way out upon the right and even underneath these same death marked trees, I beheld a marvel, a parable. The sand, always when I had seen it aforetime, dry, drifting and verdureless, had by some special fortune of good season, been lately fertilizing its pine seeds, and was covering itself with a wide, dense growth of baby pines. There were hundreds of them. Hundreds upon hundreds. Six inches, twelve inches, two feet and three feet high,



all coming on tumultuously! For every giant girdled a thousand infant growths stood pressing forward to supply its place. I said to myself, "it's a great pity to lose these fine trees; but the prospects are that we shall still have forests!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AT SUNDOWN.

Until the last year or two of his life, it was given to Doctor McLean to experience to the full the joys and serenities of age.

He was often to be met going about the streets, walking slowly but erect as of yore, enjoying the beauty of the California sky and the Berkeley hills and gardens, stopping to speak kindly and playfully to the children whom he passed, and not forgetting to greet the dogs,—for he was always a lover of animals. “Every day is more beautiful than the last,” he remarked one day to a friend whom he met. The trees and shrubbery and flowers about his own home and neighborhood were constantly under his affectionate scrutiny. The lethargy of age sometimes fell upon him, but the face of a friend was potent to dispel it and rouse again within him the old sense of comradeship and pleasure. He often spoke of his happiness and of the greatness of his blessings. He kept up his attendance at church and at the Berkeley Club meetings. Sometimes he took the familiar way to the seminary and gave the faculty and students a greeting of cheer. He loved to see the university students thronging the campus, the sense of their abounding vitality, in contrast with his own weakness, giving him not self-com-miseration but sympathetic pleasure.

The ripening of his life and the rounding out of its active services gave opportunity for the expression of the affection and honor which had been accumulating about him through the years, such as few men receive. It became a habit, after Dr. McLean had passed the age when flattery is possible, to lavish gratitude upon him, upon every available occasion. As he himself once characteristically put it, his friends were always saying: "Here's this old chap again, let's give him a good time." Banquets were held, speeches made, verses written, gifts presented, letters sent to him as often and as copiously as opportunity offered. Nothing too good could be said of him. He was called "first citizen of Oakland," "first citizen of California," "statesman," "counsellor," "minister of the manifold grace of God." On the program of the banquet given him upon his retirement from the presidency of Pacific Seminary was the well-chosen couplet:

"You hear that boy laughing? You think  
he's all fun;

But the angels laugh, too, at the good he  
has done."

All this the Doctor bore with the modesty and unflustered calm that characterized him, saying little in response, but that little from the heart, showing that he returned amply all the love that flowed out toward him.

Among the many letters of congratulation received in connection with the twenty-fifth anni-

versary of his coming to California, and with the observance of his seventieth birthday, the following have been selected, not only because of the light they throw upon the character and work of Dr. McLean, but because of their reflection of the writers:

March 25, 1904.

Dear Dr. McLean:

Across the continent I reach my hand in greeting and congratulation. I am not glad that you are seventy years old, but I am rejoiced that you have lived your life and done your work, and I devoutly wish that you might be spared to us for twice seventy years more to continue your beneficent and blessed ministry. No man among us is more universally honored and loved, and no man more richly deserves the appreciation which he receives. I have seen you on the top of Mt. Hood, and now I see you on a higher mountain and one more difficult to climb, but you have reached the splendid crest. May it be long before you are called to go down on the other side. If honor and esteem can make you happy, you ought to be one of the happiest of men as your great anniversary approaches.

Will you present my kindly greetings also to your good wife. She comes in for a large share of the grateful applause which is now finding its way toward your far Western home.

Many blessings such as you both deserve be yours—no better gift could be asked for you.

Very sincerely yours,  
AMORY H. BRADFORD.

San Francisco, April 26, 1897.

Dear Dr. McLean:

Allow me to congratulate you on the completion of your quarter century of work in this region. It is work whose results have been felt all over the continent. I remember well when you left Springfield, Ill., and the sense of loss all over that State at your going, but it has resulted in a far greater work than you could have done there. I hope you may be spared many years yet for counsel and such work as your years and experience make unusually valuable to us all.

Cordially yours,  
GEO. C. ADAMS.

Berkeley, March 31, 1904.

Professor C. S. Nash,  
Pacific Seminary,

Dear Professor:

It may seem strange that one who, like myself, has only come in upon Dr. McLean's field of activities long after their beginning, and from the outside, should venture to utter a word on an occasion such as

this. But our friend has been so much an open-air man, in every sense of the words, that even outsiders feel that they securely know him, and can vouch for the genuineness and worth of what he is and what he has done.

I therefore rejoice with you and with him, upon this auspicious day. Calm reveller in out-of-doors, camper-out, fisherman, sometimes even hunter, he has only shown in this way, during a long and vigorous life an openness and hospitality of spirit—a temper wide and free and wholesome like the sky and the broad woodland. He has thus spread around him, in his serious calling as a minister of religion and a director of theological studies, an atmosphere of liberal and invigorating conviction. Open-mindedness, accessibility to new truth, cheerful and courageous assurance that the unchangeable realities of God and religion, as presented in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, will remain unharmed, nay, will shine in only new splendor, amid all the changes that new and real experience and knowledge bring with them as mankind reaps more and more the harvests of its real powers—these have been the characters written all over the many years that our friend has lived, the interior things of his spirit that match the free and hearty gladness of his use of the air and the stream and the forest.

"Simon Peter" his old and closest friends have called him, in consonance with the half-humor, half-solemnity of his tone and his pursuit,—fisherman, but, after all, chiefly fisher of men. Unyielding, in his main purposes, the purposes of his Master, he has yet known how to enliven their earnest gravity with kindly play, and to win and hold to them multitudes of the aspiring and the progressive who might otherwise have easily wandered into the desert regions of the soul. May he see ever richer fruit of his already fruitful days.

*Salvum fac, Domine, Johannena Knox McLean!*

Believe me, dear Professor Nash,  
Yours and our friend's most cordially,  
G. H. HOWISON.

Hamilton, New York, March 25, 1904.  
My Dear Dr. McLean:

The "Congregationalist," received to-day, tells me of your approaching birthday and the celebration of it that your friends propose to make. I am only a new friend, touching only the border of your long period, but I shall be glad to be counted a real friend though a new one, and cannot be content without speaking my word of congratulation. I knew already that you had fought a good fight, and served your generation according to the will of God,

but the story that I have read to-day brings your useful service still more plainly before me. I congratulate you on it all, and on all the health and happiness and power, still unbroken, in which you come to your seventieth anniversary. May you have yet many good years for the good work. It is good to think of the outlook for service that still stretches on before you.

With warmest congratulations, in which Mrs. Clarke wishes her share to be expressed, I am,

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM NEWTON CLARKE.

Dr. McLean did not speak much about the Other Life, less probably every year as he drew nearer to it. But that is far from signifying that he did not think much about it. For years he had grounded himself in a sane and confident belief in the immortal life. In the last of his Easter sermons in his own pulpit, he said:

My soul craves immortality. I want to live; I want to live eternally; I want to live out and on some of this mortal life which I have known here; I want the life of God to be in my eternal future; but I crave to have the best things also out of this mortal life. When I can love no longer the fields and forest, and the flowers and birds, and little children and beautiful hearted women and manly and noble men; when I can no longer love the works of God and the King-



dom of God, as I love them now; and when I can no longer love the Son of God, as I love Him now, it would seem to me that then I could almost crave to die. Not to die merely, but (I say it with reverence) to be obliterated. But thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. Three things are guaranteed to us: faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love; greatest in its abiding power.

As this untiring toiler stood on the mountain summit of his seventy-eighth year, after the long climb, and looked backward and forward, he found himself, he said, agreeing with Dr. Glad-den, when, at the close of his "Recollections," he says that "religion means nothing but friendship." He, too, would like, he said, to be guaranteed another seventy years in just such a world as this. "It is good for any man who will hold up his head and keep a trusting heart." *Serus coelum radiit*. In the quiet of those autumn days he wrote out this simple statement of his faith, based on John 17: 21-23:

GOD KNOWING US, MOVING IN US, GROWING IN US; WE KNOWING GOD, MOVING IN GOD, GROWING IN GOD, ETERNALLY.

On the sixteenth day of February, 1914, Doctor McLean passed gently and painlessly into the Greater Company. His friends felt they could almost overhear the joy of the welcome. It was a grey day, of cloud and rain; but in the west there was a band of light. The funeral

service was held on the morning of February eighteenth at his home in Channing Way, and was simple and tender.

A memorial service, largely attended, was held upon Sunday afternoon, March first, at four o'clock in the First Church of Oakland. It was a radiant spring day, as full of sunshine as the spirit that had now passed beyond the sunset. The lifelike portrait painted for the church by Miss Margaret C. Herrick stood upon the platform, encircled with flowers. A chorus choir made up of many of the older singers of the church sang, "Hark, Hark, My Soul!" The hymns were: "How firm a foundation," and "For all the saints who from their labors rest."

The addresses were made by Doctor E. R. Dille, formerly pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Oakland, and a friend of many years of Doctor McLean, and by President Nash of Pacific Theological Seminary. The latter, after reviewing the larger services which Doctor McLean had rendered, said:

And then shadows crept in and twilight fell. And why? we asked. For "so"—sometimes—"He giveth His beloved sleep." And he was as one who "wanders down the dim-lit forest aisles with brooding eyes and reverent, slow feet." We could not quite attend him in the gathering shadows, not knowing all he saw. It was mainly a happy time, the happiest of his life he told me. He heard the hermit thrush in his boyhood's woods, and trod his

father's farm, and looked and listened for what might follow. One day—it might be a year or two ago—he heard me repeat a rarely beautiful stanza, and asked me for a copy. I wonder if he kept it by him, as he certainly recognized himself in its mirror. This is the picture and the prayer:

“So be my passing!  
My task accomplished and the long day done,  
My wages taken, and in my heart  
Some late lark singing;  
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,  
The sundown splendid and serene.”

The Berkeley Club, formed in 1873, of which he was the last surviving charter member, held a memorial on the evening of April third, at which grateful reminiscent words were spoken by many of his friends. Other tributes, personal and public came from every side, justifying the statement of Dr. Edward Lincoln Smith concerning him in *The Congregationalist*: “He exerted a wider and deeper influence on the Pacific Coast than any other individual man.”

The restless, on-moving current of Pacific Coast civilization into which Doctor McLean cast his life sweeps swiftly on in ever widening channels, eagerly concerned with the present and the future, forgetful of the past. Yet this man who so earnestly loved and served the life of the Pacific Coast in its formative days, and who was in turn so taken to its heart, will remain, as one

whose strong, ennobling influence cannot be expunged from its future. And the men and women of faith, who in all the coming years lift their eyes to the sun-bathed circle of these hills and mountains that he loved will find life truer and purer, more real and joyous, because of John Knox McLean.







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